

**REPORT
FROM THE
INSPECTORATE**

Kensington and Chelsea College

April 1996

**THE
FURTHER
EDUCATION
FUNDING
COUNCIL**

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FUNDING COUNCIL**

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

College inspections are carried out in accordance with the framework and guidelines described in Council Circular 93/28. They involve full-time inspectors and registered part-time inspectors who have knowledge and experience in the work they inspect. Inspection teams normally include at least one member who does not work in education and a member of staff from the college being inspected.

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GRADE DESCRIPTORS

The procedures for assessing quality are set out in the Council Circular 93/28. During their inspection, inspectors assess the strengths and weaknesses of each aspect of provision they inspect. Their assessments are set out in the reports. They also use a five-point grading scale to summarise the balance between strengths and weaknesses.

The descriptors for the grades are:

- *grade 1 – provision which has many strengths and very few weaknesses*
- *grade 2 – provision in which the strengths clearly outweigh the weaknesses*
- *grade 3 – provision with a balance of strengths and weaknesses*
- *grade 4 – provision in which the weaknesses clearly outweigh the strengths*
- *grade 5 – provision which has many weaknesses and very few strengths.*

By June 1995, some 208 college inspections had been completed. The grade profiles for aspects of cross-college provision and programme areas for the 208 colleges are shown in the following table.

College grade profiles 1993-95

Activity	Inspection grades				
	1	2	3	4	5
Programme area	9%	60%	28%	3%	<1%
Cross-college provision	13%	51%	31%	5%	<1%
Overall	11%	56%	29%	4%	<1%

FEFC INSPECTION REPORT 54/96

KENSINGTON AND CHELSEA COLLEGE

GREATER LONDON REGION

Inspected September 1995-January 1996

Summary

Kensington and Chelsea College caters mainly for adult students and offers a wide range of courses. The college identifies local needs through its good links with community and voluntary organisations. The college's governing body works effectively with senior management. College staff are involved in strategic planning through extensive consultation. Teachers have particular understanding of the needs of adult learners. The quality of teaching and the students' achievements, overall, are high. Teachers are well qualified and part-time staff bring up-to-date industrial practice and experience to their lessons. Relationships between staff and students are good. The staff-development programme is linked to an appraisal system which includes the observation of all teachers, full time and part time. The college's quality assurance system places particular importance on the students' views of their teaching and learning. A number of matters require attention. The college's management information system is insufficiently developed. Progression routes from all courses need to be clearly identified. Procedures for accrediting the prior learning of adult students should be established. Course reviews should analyse data on performance indicators and use standards which match those set out in the college's charter. There are insufficient technicians in some curriculum areas. Some specialist equipment is inadequate and there is a shortage of up-to-date equipment for information technology.

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		2
Resources:	staffing	2
	equipment/learning resources	4
	accommodation	3

Curriculum area	Grade	Curriculum area	Grade
Business studies	3	English and EFL	2
Food studies	2	Modern languages	1
Health and community care and hairdressing	2	Adult basic education, ESOL and provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities	3
Art and design and drama	2		

INTRODUCTION

1 Kensington and Chelsea College was inspected between September 1995 and January 1996. A team of 13 full-time and part-time inspectors spent a total of 63 days inspecting provision in the college. They visited 122 classes attended by 1,156 students, and inspected a broad range of students' written and practical work. Meetings were held with members of the corporation, senior and middle managers, teachers and support staff, students, employers, and a representative of the Central London Training and Enterprise Council (TEC). A corporation meeting was observed. Inspectors had access to extensive documentation relating to the college's policies, procedures and courses.

THE COLLEGE AND ITS AIMS

2 The college was established by the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea in 1990, from the merger of parts of two former Inner London Education Authority adult education institutes. It was incorporated in 1993. Since 1990, student numbers have risen threefold and, in accordance with the college's mission, most of the 17,353 students are over 19 years of age. In addition to courses funded by the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC), the college also provides a wide range of courses for adults on behalf of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea. The college was the first in inner London to achieve Investor in People status. Enrolments by age and by level of study are shown in figures 1 and 2.

3 The college operates from three main sites in different parts of the borough. Two-thirds of the students enrolled at the college live in the borough. In addition, the Wornington Road centre is conveniently located for residents of Brent, the Marlborough centre attracts residents of Westminster and the Hortensia Road centre borders Hammersmith and Fulham. Courses are provided through four faculties: access, care, business, humanities and languages; art, craft, design and hairdressing; communication and learning support; performing arts, sport, health and food. Enrolments by mode of attendance and curriculum area are shown in figure 3.

4 There are two major groupings at senior management level. The first is the principalship. This consists of the principal, vice-principal, assistant principal and the director of finance. The second is a senior management team of 12 which includes the principalship as well as the four heads of faculty, the unit directors for student services and marketing, the sites manager and the personnel manager. Teaching is managed in the faculties through sections, each led by a section head assisted by course directors. The titles given to the section heads differ across the faculties. A staff profile, with staff expressed as full-time equivalents, is shown in figure 4.

5 The borough is the most densely populated in England and has over 7,000 unemployed adults. The catchment area for the college includes the

relatively affluent areas in the south of the borough and the comparatively poor districts in the north. About 16 per cent of the borough's residents are from a minority ethnic background. Of last year's 16,794 enrolments 71 per cent were female and 35 per cent were from minority ethnic backgrounds.

6 In pursuit of its mission the college has worked to maximise funding to support adult learning. This has resulted in a 63 per cent increase in funding through the FEFC since incorporation, a contract to provide the local authority's adult education programme until 1998, an increase in funding through the European Social Fund and a range of projects supported by city challenge.

RESPONSIVENESS AND RANGE OF PROVISION

7 The college offers a broad range of academic, vocational and adult education courses catering for students of all abilities. Priority is given to providing continuing education for adults. Ninety-six per cent of students are aged over 19 and numbers have grown from around 1,000 to 3,000 full-time equivalents in five years. Students attend full-time and part-time courses in sciences, business, health and community care, art and design, humanities and basic education. Art and design and basic education courses attract the highest full-time enrolments. There are over three times as many part-time as full-time students. Most provision is pitched at foundation level but an increasing number of intermediate and advanced courses are being developed.

8 Vocational programmes have developed rapidly and students can now study for more than 40 vocational qualifications. General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) and National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) programmes are provided for full-time students in five vocational areas with a further three programmes scheduled for 1996. Fifteen subjects are offered at General Certificate of Education advanced level (GCE A level) and 12 at General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) level, together with five GCE advanced supplementary (AS) subjects. These subjects are made available for those wishing to study part time and can be studied as free-standing subjects or as part of a broader academic or vocational programme. Over 400 students are enrolled on GCE A level or GCSE programmes. Modern language provision is extensive, including GCE A levels and/or GCSE in Arabic, French, German, Greek, Italian, Japanese, Portuguese, Russian and Spanish. Courses in hairdressing, counselling, and health and social care have recently been added to the curriculum. A large basic education and English for speakers of other languages programme is provided for educationally disadvantaged adults.

9 The college offers a wide range of courses at various levels. Many students on art and design and access courses progress to higher education. In some areas, such as English as a foreign language and food studies, opportunities for progression have not been clearly identified. The college does not offer courses in food studies leading to relevant NVQs

or GNVQs which permit progression to other further and higher education courses.

10 The college provides an extensive adult education programme for the local education authority (LEA). There are 300 courses in 84 different subjects, ranging from opera performance training to writing poetry, from upholstery to tai chi. The most popular courses at present are introduction to computing, Italian level 1, Spanish level 1, yoga, badminton and photography, each of which has enrolled over 100 students. Funding from the European Social Fund and city challenge supports a number of initiatives with women returners and adults. Programmes are targeted at priority groups and communities mainly in the north of the borough.

11 The college has widened access to education and training for students, particularly those not free to study within traditional working hours. Some programmes are timetabled to enable parents to deliver and collect children from school and some courses are offered at weekends. An increasing number of courses are modular and students may complete them over a longer timescale. Opportunities for distance learning are being developed and expanded. Summer programmes are held for refugees. Modest progress has been made in developing European links. At present, students go to Italy and Greece and there is an exchange with students from Barcelona. A significant number of staff come from European countries and can contribute to future developments. Many students have work placements but it has proved difficult to provide these for drama students.

12 Courses are offered in 20 different venues, five of which are college sites. The college has a small budget which helps to pay the transport costs of students with restricted mobility. Some students, however, fail to attend classes because they are unable to pay for transport to the appropriate building.

13 Liaison with community groups is generally good, though largely reliant on informal contacts. Community representatives have identified the need for more systematic liaison and governors have set up a committee to improve co-ordination. The college works in partnership with many local organisations to meet the needs of different groups, sometimes at sites which are not owned by the college. For example, the Nottingdale Technology Centre offers information technology and basic skills to younger unemployed people. The college provides the teaching, and the centre provides the information technology network. Teaching resources and main site accommodation are provided to support a training programme for refugees and migrants from Africa, the Middle East and Asia. An over 50s group uses a college ground floor meeting room and, after the fourth week, its members can join classes free of charge if there are vacancies. The college provides accommodation and support for the Moroccan Enterprise and Training Centre. This project responds to the educational needs of the largest Moroccan community in the country.

It was established by a partnership including the local community, the Moroccan Embassy, North Kensington City Challenge and the college. Two hundred and twenty students attend courses in information technology, English and Arabic and receive employment advice.

14 Access courses, validated by the London Open College Federation, prepare students for a range of higher education disciplines and about 77 per cent progress to higher education. Links with higher education institutions are largely informal. Many of the art and design students who progress to higher education go to Chelsea and Slade Schools of Art and Goldsmiths College. There is an arrangement with the West London Institute that guarantees successful sports students an interview.

15 The borough has a high proportion of small employers; 94 per cent of employment is in the service sector and there is a strong interest in overseas trade. The college's links with local employers are limited. Work placements are offered to students in areas such as millinery, childcare and hairdressing. One employer in hairdressing comes to the college to assess students' work. The college works closely with Central London TEC and this has led to the funding of a project which is helping staff to introduce GNVQ programmes. There are no formal curriculum links with other further education colleges but the college is part of an Inner London consortium which aims to provide educational services through the Internet. The college has been recognised as a centre to provide Training and Development Lead Body training programmes for assessors but courses are not yet being offered.

16 The college has a good range of income-generating activities, such as those through government initiatives and the European Social Fund and these have produced a turnover of £349,200 in 1995-96. The college has not yet produced a longer-term strategy for funding and development. Commercial activities, where the college sells services at full cost are limited but slowly expanding. These include: courses in French for reception staff at the Victoria and Albert Museum; courses in counselling for the local authority's youth service and in first aid for local charities; an intensive short course for ski chalet staff which aims to give them a range of skills in cookery, cleaning and health and safety in the mountains. The college has set aside funds to encourage further developments in its commercial activities.

17 Marketing is effective. Enrolment targets were exceeded by 6 per cent in 1994 and 10 per cent overall in 1995. A qualified and experienced marketing manager leads a team who are producing work of high professional standard. The prospectus and publicity materials are well designed and visually attractive.

18 The policy on equal opportunities covers student admission, progression routes, staff appointments, language issues, harassment, childcare and HIV/AIDS. Particular priority is given to the inclusion of people with disabilities at all levels of the curriculum. Significant progress

has been made in raising the profile of minority ethnic communities. The number of salaried staff from minority ethnic backgrounds has increased from six in 1990 to 34 currently and the percentage of students from minority ethnic backgrounds has risen from 22 to 35 per cent in the same period. High priority is given to equal opportunities issues in staff training and student induction programmes.

GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

19 The arrangements for the governance of the college are effective. The board of the corporation has 16 members, seven of whom are women, and two of whom are from minority ethnic groups. As well as the principal, there are two staff members, one elected from the teaching staff and one from the support staff, and one elected student member. There are eight business members and four co-opted members. One member is nominated by Central London TEC. The college director of finance supports the board effectively as clerk to the corporation. Experience of education, accounting, the law, property, personnel and general business is brought to the corporation through its membership. Members demonstrate a high level of commitment to the college. Attendance at meetings is satisfactory, with an average of 77 per cent attendance in 1994-95. Governors visit the college to strengthen their understanding of its day-to-day work and to support events such as art exhibitions, drama performances, award ceremonies and the annual Chelsea Fashion Show. Several governors have attended courses in the college.

20 The main subcommittees of the governing body are employment and finance, audit, remuneration, governor nomination and community liaison. All committees have terms of reference and appropriate membership, which includes outside members where there is a need for particular professional expertise. Additional advisory or task groups such as the marketing advisory group are set up for specific projects. Meetings of the board and its committees are held regularly, to a published schedule. Members receive comprehensive, well-organised information before meetings. Documentation of meetings of the main board and the subcommittees is good, with decisions made and action to be taken clearly identified. Regular reports are received on finance, curriculum developments and quality. College managers are invited to meetings from time to time to make presentations on developments in the college. Recent presentations have included curriculum review and evaluation, and a paper on the proposed extension of the college employee development and assistance programme. The governors receive an annual report from the college and the principal presents a progress report at each meeting.

21 Governors have a clear understanding of their role. The governor nomination committee meets regularly to ensure that, as governors' terms of office are ending, a suitable candidate is sought as a replacement. There is a careful recruitment and induction programme for new governors, and job descriptions for the role of chair and vice-chair have been produced.

All governors sign a code of conduct. The distinction between governance and management is clearly understood by the board and the managers of the college. An operating statement sets out the arrangements for delegation of responsibilities to the principal in line with the corporation rules. The governors and the senior managers of the college have an effective working relationship. Governors review their own performance and roles annually. Individual training needs are identified, and members attend appropriate training courses.

22 The major decision-making groups concerned with the management of the college are the principalship, the senior management team, the academic board and faculty boards. The management of these groups is effective. All groups meet regularly. The principalship and senior management team meet fortnightly and other major groups meet at least twice a term. The academic board has 23 members of whom 12 are permanent and 11 are elected. A member of the governing body attends as an observer. Task groups have been set up by the college to work on projects such as retention, tutorials and study centre developments. Minutes of meetings clearly identify decisions made and actions to be taken. The college has produced a useful set of guidelines for the conduct of meetings, and the recording of decisions. All managers have job descriptions and understand their roles and responsibilities. Within faculties and operational units, managers have the freedom to develop their own structures and procedures. The college employs a large number of part-time teachers which means that all full-time teachers have a curriculum co-ordination or line-management role. Section heads and course directors, some of whom are part-time teachers, have substantial teaching loads and often have insufficient time to perform their management tasks as well as they would wish.

23 The process of strategic planning is carefully timetabled and well organised. Teaching and support staff contribute to strategy development through faculty boards or through their unit managers and at strategic planning meetings. The first draft of the strategic plan is produced by the principalship, and presented to the governors for comment. A summary of the draft plan is circulated to all staff for consultation before being presented formally for approval by the senior management team, academic board and the board of the corporation. Staff and governors report a high degree of involvement in the strategic planning process. Since 1994-95 the college has set performance indicators in line with its strategic objectives and these are reviewed annually.

24 The college has policies for most major aspects of its work. These are developed by working groups and submitted to the principalship or academic board before being considered by the governors for approval. There is a three-year review cycle for all policies. For example, the special needs policy has recently been reviewed and its scope extended. The health and safety policy has been developed with the assistance of an

outside consultant who acts as safety officer. Its implementation is overseen by the health and safety committee chaired by the head of administration. All policies are freely available for scrutiny in the study centres.

25 Budgets for staffing and consumables are delegated to faculties and operational units. Monthly detailed reports are received by managers informing them of their financial position. Staff and managers understand the need for efficiency. The college is introducing a new system for the allocation of funds based on the income generated by courses. Managers will receive training in its operation. Currently, unit costs are not calculated although they are a key feature of the new financial system.

26 There are uncertainties about the college's performance indicators for courses. Reliable information on retention is not available for the years before 1994-95. The college has collected data on intended destinations of students, but the information on actual destinations is incomplete. A questionnaire put to 3,700 of last year's students on destinations was completed by only 30 per cent. The college's computerised management information system needs further development. It is unable to produce all the information about students and courses needed for managers to work effectively. The college has made recent key appointments of staff with responsibility for finance and information systems. Detailed action plans have been produced to improve management information systems. Progress towards the installation of a new management information system is underway.

27 Communications within the college are generally good. The principal produces a monthly newsletter to staff which is distributed with salary advice slips. A staff bulletin is produced twice a term. There are annual conferences for full-time and part-time staff on college issues. Faculties and units have additional whole-day meetings with staff to consider college matters, the most recent of which was concerned with strategic planning. The principal and senior managers hold well-attended monthly lunches for staff on the two major college sites. Staff from across the faculties are given the opportunity to meet senior managers and colleagues informally. Staff report that they are well informed. Last year the principal held a series of meetings with small groups of staff to discuss college matters, and to hear the views of staff. Communications between college sites have been improved by the installation of a new telephone system.

28 The college's income and expenditure for the 12 months to July 1995 are shown in figures 5 and 6. In 1995-96 the college is receiving £3,988,645 from the FEFC to fund its 223,821 units of activity. The college's average level of funding is £16.50 per unit, which is below the median for general further education and tertiary colleges of £17.84. The college has been successful in bidding for project funds from the European Social Fund, the city challenge and other sources to supplement its income from the FEFC and from the local authority.

STUDENTS' RECRUITMENT, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

29 The college has a tradition of providing good individual support and guidance to adult students, and has substantial experience of the specific needs of adults. Since incorporation, systems have been developed to formalise and strengthen the support offered, which is now mostly provided centrally through student services. Many of these new systems are not yet fully implemented, or are undergoing modification.

30 The recruitment and admissions procedures are administered by the admissions centre, which forms part of student services. Each member of the admissions staff has responsibility for recruitment to two of the faculties and co-ordination of the interviews for applicants to courses within those faculties. Prospective students can attend open advice sessions for initial guidance on the courses. These are run on one evening each week from February in the year of entry. Training has strengthened the expertise of the advice team. Two trained lecturers from each faculty work with experienced educational guidance officers so that prospective students have access to detailed knowledge of courses from an early stage. There is good liaison between staff in admissions and in the faculties. There have, however, been a few instances when enquirers have received incomplete or incorrect information from admissions staff.

31 When prospective students are initially interviewed they usually discuss their previous experience of education and training with staff. Staff are well-informed about overseas qualifications and their equivalence to comparable qualifications in the United Kingdom. Prospective students for adult basic education programmes are tested to determine the level of skills they already have. The college lacks, however, general procedures for finding out what prospective students to courses across the college already know and can do. As a result, some students are spending time on their courses unnecessarily repeating work they have done previously. Staff are investigating ways and means of establishing good practice in the accreditation of prior learning, particularly for courses leading to NVQs and GNVQs.

32 There are separate prospectuses and application forms for courses funded by the LEA and those funded by the FEFC. These forms are well designed and provide the college with essential information. The dual prospectuses and differing fee structures for adult and further education courses have, however, caused prospective students some confusion during the enrolment period. Enrolment practices are flexible. For instance, applications to the adult education programmes may be made by post. Applicants to further education programmes are often interviewed by specialist staff at the centre where the classes in question take place. Applicants for courses in English for speakers of other languages, adult basic education and English as a foreign language are tested and interviewed by specialist staff. In general, the enrolment procedures ran smoothly. Staff with signing skills were on hand for students with impaired

hearing. Those who spoke languages other than English were identified through their badges. Senior staff were on hand to help and to ensure that long queues did not build up. The admissions procedures for 1995 were evaluated by staff and students in a 'first impressions' survey, and were found to be an improvement over those for previous years.

33 All new students receive a general induction which is well organised by student services. A friendly and welcoming atmosphere is created in the main hall where stalls display the different services available to students. Tutors take or send their students to make contact with student services. Meetings are arranged by means of a special booking sheet which also provides a check on which groups have used the student services. If necessary, tutors can book follow-up visits to the study centres and counselling services for their students. All tutors receive training in induction. They are also given a handbook containing details of all the support and facilities. Similarly, students receive a handbook which sets out the college's charter and lists the facilities and staff responsible for each service.

34 The college provides effective support for students who need help with basic skills. At the Wornington Road site there is an open learning centre where students may work on their own. This is well resourced. Staff with expertise in the teaching of English for speakers of other languages or GCSE mathematics are on hand to give guidance. Students may attend sessions either of their own initiative or because they have been referred to the centre by their course tutor. Students usually agree a learning plan with staff at the centre and this records the progress made. There is also a learning support team which provides one-to-one sessions for students and these are tailored to their specific needs. Students are usually referred by their tutors to the learning support team. There are twice-termly meetings between teachers in the support team and course tutors to discuss the students' progress.

35 A co-ordinator for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities arranges for relevant support to be provided before students begin their courses. Classes are re-scheduled in ground floor rooms where possible to provide access to wheelchair users. The college has recently introduced a new policy designed to enable these students to benefit from the full range of the college's provision.

36 There is a tradition of informal tutorial support for students, provided by their teachers. A new system of course tutors, with timetabled tutorial hours on courses, has recently been introduced. The effectiveness of this varies. Many tutors use the time well, usually in one-to-one progress reviews with their students, but others do not manage the time properly and students often fail to attend.

37 Attendance is closely monitored through class registers which are checked regularly by administration staff. Two consecutive weeks' absence triggers a letter or phone call from the tutor. The wording of the letter

emphasises the support which will be given to help students to catch up on work missed and offering a chance to discuss the course. After four weeks of unexplained absence the student is deemed to have left and a letter is sent to that effect.

38 Effective advice on higher education choices and application procedures, grants and benefits and general careers guidance is available to all students. Some subject teachers book group talks on career and progression opportunities in their specialism. Students drop in to the advice centre for individual interviews, or they may use the reference materials in the study centres; these are quiet rooms with library reference materials available to students at the Wornington and Hortensia sites. One guidance session is held between 16.00 and 18.00 hours, so that evening students can attend before their classes begin. In 1994-95, 689 guidance interviews were held, mostly at Wornington. The college has recently appointed a full-time careers adviser who will eventually replace the LEA's careers service provision.

39 The college has an effective professional counselling service which has helped some students in personal difficulties to continue their studies. The counsellor works closely with the guidance co-ordinator so that practical problems, often involving financial difficulties, can be dealt with effectively. Referrals are made to outside agencies when appropriate.

40 There is a nursery on one site and a creche at another. The nursery, partly funded by city challenge, has a long waiting list, and the opening hours of the creche are inconvenient for further education students. If these facilities are to be used to best effect to support students, the procedures for obtaining places in them need to be clarified.

41 The college has an active students' association, with a part-time co-ordinator paid for by the college. The association will represent students who are called to account on disciplinary charges. Its main function is to provide financial advice and assistance to students. It draws on a small hardship fund created by the college to provide help with the purchase of books and materials, attendance on educational trips and payment of examination fees. This fund is in addition to the college's access fund, which totalled £14,837 in 1994-95, and the work related further education bursary of £12,000 for the same period as well as funds from a bequest made upon his death by a former member of staff.

TEACHING AND THE PROMOTION OF LEARNING

42 Inspectors observed a total of 122 teaching and learning sessions involving 1,156 students. In 68 per cent of sessions, strengths outweighed weaknesses, and in 5 per cent there were weaknesses which outweighed strengths. The average attendance at the sessions inspected was 67 per cent.

Teaching sessions: inspection grades by programme of study

Programmes	Grade	1	2	3	4	5	Totals
GCE AS/A level		4	1	2	0	0	7
GCSE		2	4	3	0	0	9
GNVQ/NVQ		2	2	2	2	0	8
Access		5	6	3	0	0	14
Other vocational		9	23	9	1	0	42
Basic education		3	6	2	2	0	13
SLDD and ESOL		9	7	12	1	0	29
Total		34	49	33	6	0	122

43 Courses are generally well planned to meet the varied needs of adult learners. Course documentation is generally good, with clear and well-designed statements of course aims, lesson plans and tutorial record sheets. In English, for example, thorough course files are kept which include schemes of work and lesson plans. All students receive an attractive, informative handbook relating to their courses, which includes statements of course aims, programmes, details about syllabuses, assignments, projects, skills to be covered, examinations, and methods of assessment.

44 In the best practice, class teachers drew effectively upon the previous experiences of the adult students. Working together in pairs or small groups, the students shared their experiences with one another. In a business studies lesson, the teacher drew on the experiences of the students in order to reinforce their understanding of the concept of petty cash. Access students from a variety of backgrounds explored their own varied experiences and knowledge of different cultural traditions in an anthropology course. In intermediate and advanced cookery classes, students had considerable experience of cookery and they were encouraged to apply their skills in new contexts. Lessons in all subjects were enlivened by humour and enriched by the relevant personal experiences of both teachers and students.

45 Group work was soundly complemented with individual assignments or practical projects. Individual activities in art and design were, almost always, carefully prepared, stimulating and realistically planned. Teachers were challenging but supportive, allowing students to explore their own ideas and arrive at conclusions for themselves. In fine art and general art and design, the projects and standards of teaching were high, taking students beyond normally expected levels of achievement. In a drama class, students practised wu chu martial arts skills and translated this experience into different ways of carrying out movement and improvisation. In food studies, students were well briefed for each practical session and, in most classes, were encouraged to plan their work in

advance. Teachers in food studies gave good support to mature students who had underachieved in their earlier education and needed help with basic skills, as well as encouraging all students to aspire to standards beyond their original qualification aims. In hairdressing, following an effective demonstration in the basic skills of cutting hair and a supervised practice, students were given the opportunity to work on their own. Understanding was checked at each stage, questions fully dealt with, and students' attention and involvement maintained.

46 There were some examples of poor practice in the education of adults. Occasionally teachers stuck too rigidly to the text book and more attempts could have been made to draw out students' experience. Some projects in fashion lacked clear direction. There was some good work in classes in English for speakers of other languages, but there was some use of inappropriate material. In some practical lessons in food studies, opportunities to relate principles to theory were missed. The limited sales outlet for food prepared by students and insufficient opportunities for catering on a commercial scale limited the scope of some work in food studies. In a business studies class, there were vociferous complaints from one group of students about the lack of coherence and momentum on their programme. They complained about the frequent changes of lecturer and the poor quality of some teaching.

47 There was mutual respect between teachers and students and their relationships were generally positive and relaxed. Most teachers challenged their students and regularly checked to make sure they understood what they had learnt. Teachers were keenly aware that for many mature students, their course represents the fulfilment of long-held ambitions. Teachers displayed understanding of some of the social pressures placed upon adult students. Even so, the poor punctuality and irregular attendance of some students had a detrimental effect upon the quality of learning in some classes. Some classes did not start on time and work had to be repeated for the benefit of latecomers.

48 Most teachers provided the students with good-quality handouts and learning materials which the students could study on their own. Teachers made good use of audio-visual aids, especially in language classes. In food studies, a photographic record was kept of dishes prepared by the students and this stimulated them to take pride in their work.

49 Setting, marking and assessment of the assignments are generally appropriate and accepted as fair by students, who understand the standards to be achieved. There is, however, a need to develop criteria for standardising the marking of students' work throughout the college. In food studies, students receive detailed information on their progress through a range of tests which consolidate their previous learning. In most practical sessions students are encouraged to evaluate their own work and be constructive and critical. An effective personal planning and review pack for adult basic education students contains a learning plan, a

review record sheet to be filled in regularly, an evaluation form and an action plan.

50 Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are catered for effectively on part-time courses by committed part-time staff. Class sizes are generally small. Courses in British sign language are clearly planned and externally accredited. The college aims to enable a range of students with different disabilities to achieve success, and a system for providing them with additional support across the college is being developed. The timetables of some students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities lack a central purpose; they are insufficiently structured and consist of a set of unrelated lessons. The aims of some courses are unclear and learning goals have not been set. Higher expectations of some students' standards of behaviour and timekeeping need to be clear to them if they aspire to progress to more advanced courses. There is scope for further development of the support role of social services workers who attend classes with the students.

STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENTS

51 Effective teaching and the good relationship between staff and students have combined to enable most students to achieve their primary learning goal. The majority of the college's students are attending part time and taking a diverse range of subjects. Eighty-eight per cent of students completing certificated courses in 1994-95 were successful.

52 Owing to the departure of key staff, progress in the improvement of the management information system to provide student profile information for all programmes prior to 1994-95 has been slower than the college anticipated. As a consequence, full enrolment and retention information was not available for inspection. The college has reported a steady increase in the retention rates of students in most programme areas. In access, care, business, humanities and languages, retention in 1994-95 ranged from 96 per cent for some care, languages and first aid courses to 52 per cent for an intake on a National Nursery Examinations Board modular course. In art, craft, design and hairdressing, retention averaged 83 per cent. However, there has been an increase in retention in all these subjects compared with 1993-94. In adult basic education 93 per cent of students completed their programmes in 1994-95. In the faculty of performing arts, sport, health and food studies, there was a marked improvement in retention in 1994-95 compared with 1993-94 from 67 per cent to 83 per cent. The improvement in the retention rate for food studies may help to increase the number of examination entries in the two-year part-time programme. This good performance has been attributed to improved interview procedures and tutorial systems. Other methods adopted for improving retention have been the provision of personal planning and review packs for students, the clear statement of course objectives and accreditation goals and systematic follow up of those who miss classes.

53 Only eight students aged 16 to 18 entered for GCE AS or A level subjects in 1995. Those who entered achieved an average point score per entry of 4.9 points (where A=10, E=2), which places the college in the top third of colleges in the further education sector on this performance measure, based on data in the 1995 performance tables published by the Department for Education and Employment. In 1994 the score was 2.7. The average points score per candidate in 1995 was 6.3. There was a total of 156 subject entries for GCE A level in 1995. Sixty-five per cent of those entered gained A to E grade passes, which exceeded the average for England, of 63 per cent, for candidates over 19 years old.

54 In 1995, 100 per cent pass rates were achieved by students in Italian, theatre studies, history, art and Spanish. Results in most subjects improved between 1993 and 1995, but in accounting, business studies, music and economics pass rates declined in successive years, with results in these subjects being below the average for sector colleges in 1995.

55 There were 170 subject entries in nine separate GCSE subjects in 1995. Results in eight of the subjects were substantially above the national average for students aged 19 years and over in further education colleges. In four modern foreign languages, all candidates gained A to C grades.

56 Students from the college study for a wide and varied range of vocational awards. Subjects include: London Open College Federation credits in craft subjects and wine and spirit trust certificates; RSA Examinations Board (RSA) and Pitmans secretarial awards; as well as GNVQ and NVQ programmes. In 1995, there were 264 entries for City and Guilds of London Institute (C&G) certificated courses, an increase of 67 per cent over 1994. The total number of certificates awarded as a proportion of entries increased from 88 per cent to 95 per cent. Entries for Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) certificates, diplomas and GNVQs have increased steadily from 33 in 1992 to 110 in 1995. Eighty-one per cent of candidates were awarded certificates in 1995.

57 In art and design, and craft and performing arts, upon which the majority of full-time students are enrolled, the level of student achievement is high. In photography, students have achieved successes in major competitions, including second prize in The Guardian Fabergé award. At the Chelsea festival, millinery creations attracted substantial commissions from visitors to the festival. Over half the 14 students entered for the design certificate gained distinctions in 1995 and 93 per cent passed; a great improvement on 1994, when the pass rate was 50 per cent. A pre-foundation art and design course was introduced for 1995; 28 of the 33 students enrolled went on to higher education in 1995. In the BTEC national diploma in general art and design, 18 out of 24 students enrolled for the second year gained places in higher education. Of 93 students who went on to higher education in 1995, 37 per cent were part time. In 1995, 30 per cent of full-time and 24 per cent of part-time students completing

their courses continued with additional further education. Students are well motivated, taking pride in the skills they have gained and the work they produce. The standard of practical work is high. Project work in general art and design covers a wide range and shows the ability to move ideas through several different media. Portfolios of fine art include sophisticated original work and students speak vividly and eloquently about them. In a ceramics class for beginners, the standard of pieces being produced was remarkably high for students working with clay for the first time. In drama, students work well together and develop relevant practical skills for careers in the performing arts, as well as achieving good overall examination results.

58 An intermediate GNVQ in art and design was introduced for the first time in 1994-95. Of the 21 students who enrolled 14 (67 per cent), completed the course, 10 of whom (71 per cent) gained the full qualification. A better pass rate had been achieved in the BTEC first diploma, which this GNVQ replaced. There is a general need to strengthen and widen the development of core skills and to foster the use of information technology in particular.

59 Good results are achieved by adult learners in modern foreign languages. Staff are strict about the completion of homework and high standards of written work are achieved. Results at GCSE have improved steadily and are well above national averages. Achievements at GCE A level are consistently high. The college won the Deakin Rose Bowl award for the second most successful performance in the Institute of Linguist examination in 1994. Overall pass rates for the institute's examinations are good, although numbers are small and the high cost of entry deters some students. From 1994, therefore, the college offered entry to London Chamber of Commerce and Industry language examinations as an alternative. Of the 30 candidates entered in one of five languages, including Russian and Japanese, 27 passed and there were 10 distinctions and eight credits.

60 Eighty per cent of the 46 entrants for GCSE English gained A to C grades in 1995 compared with the national average of 71 per cent for students aged 19 or over. In English as a foreign language, students reach appropriate standards in reading, writing, speaking and listening. Achievements in the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate examinations exceed national figures.

61 Results on the wide range of RSA and Pitmans secretarial courses are good, as are results for book-keeping and access to higher education. However, GCE A level results in business are below the national average.

62 In food studies, the irregular attendance of some students adversely affects their performance. Nevertheless, the pass rates overall are satisfactory, except in the written part of the C&G cooks certificate, where the pass rate fell from 62 per cent in 1994 to 39 per cent in 1995.

63 The levels of retention in most health and care courses are satisfactory. Most students who complete their courses are successful in their final assessments and go on to related further education or work. During their studies, care students develop communication and group work skills and the capacity to carry out investigations and record their findings. Hairdressing students develop effective professional competences and behaviour, but numeracy and information technology skills are not generally well developed.

64 There were 71 students on the access to higher education courses in 1994; 40 gained full access certificates and 42 won places at a wide and varied range of higher education establishments. In 1995, 68 students gained 38 full certificates and 45 places were offered in higher education. Over one-third of all students in the college applying for university places through the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) are on access courses. The majority reach satisfactory levels of achievement to enable progression to higher education. The attendance rate of access students is variable. The college may need to monitor the attendance record of some access students and find out why they do not attend regularly.

65 The college has been awarded the Basic Skills Agency quality mark for its adult basic education. Students speak positively about their programmes and have been increasingly successful during the last three years in the Associated Examining Board and C&G certificates. The attendance of some students is erratic. The courses do not yet offer a secure pathway into vocational or access courses and the skills achieved by some students are not formally recognised through accreditation. The achievements of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are accredited through London Open College Federation.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

66 College staff are generally self-critical, and have successfully employed informal methods of quality assurance to raise academic quality and standards. The college decided to supplement these informal practices with a formal system which operated for the first time in 1994-95. The new system makes good use of the views of both staff and students and it aims at continuous improvement. A quality manual describes the cycle for monitoring the quality of the curriculum and identifies 36 standards relating to courses. Course teams are required to define the standards for their course in relation to the college standards and to list evidence that can be produced to prove that they are working to them. They also have to state the action required, by whom and by when. Reports of the reviews are presented to faculty boards and faculty reports are presented to the academic board and governors.

67 Almost all staff believed that the process of setting standards for aspects of the course they taught was beneficial and made them think

more rigorously about what they aimed to achieve. In the first year of the college's formal quality assurance system, the action planning was imprecise and the quality of course reviews varied. Further training and the additional task of completing a summary sheet in the course review document have led to improvements. There are many standards to monitor and some are given more attention than others. Not all course teams make full use of performance indicators to monitor standards, set targets for improving retention, progression and achievement or establish priorities for action. Faculty reports draw on information from a variety of sources, including the course reviews. They include action plans, but the level of detail varies and the plans would benefit from a common format.

68 The charter is included in the student handbook and cross-referenced to other college documents. Standards are related to the 36 standards in the quality manual, but not all are easily measured. Staff in administration, learning resources and student services are developing quality standards for their work. At present, there is no quality assurance to cover functions such as finance, personnel and premises. The quality policy and procedures are to be reviewed at the end of the academic year 1995-96. To ensure consistency, the college now needs to link the standards in the charter and the course review document, and relate them to the objectives of the college mission. The teaching and learning quality subcommittee has not so far monitored the implementation of the policy and procedures.

69 The college attaches importance to listening to the views of students. Quality assurance reports make use of surveys of students' opinions, contents of suggestions boxes and complaints. College surveys were conducted three times in 1994-95. A sample of students were asked questions on new services, accommodation and teaching. Their views have been studied and acted upon. For instance, the opening hours of the college cafes have been extended and there have been improvements in the admissions process. Course tutors conduct their own surveys through written questionnaires and discussions in group tutorials. These surveys inform faculty reports, but there is no central monitoring to ensure that they take place. Some courses have students on their course teams. Although many students felt that they had opportunities to express their views, students on some courses were not aware of how to do this.

70 The college has a strong tradition of caring for and supporting its staff. The college's mission statement expresses a commitment to developing all staff to help students to learn. The strategic plan sets a target budget for staff development, including staffing costs, of 1.5 per cent of the annual budget. The amount spent on staff development in 1994-95 was £87,000. Of this, £20,000 was delegated to faculties and units according to identified needs such as restructuring or new curriculum developments. The rest was held centrally and managed by a professional development tutor. A training plan, derived from the strategic plan, is drawn up each year following consultation with senior managers. A range of courses is delivered in-house. A conference has been held for the last

three years for the large number of part-time staff. Sessions, delivered by full-time staff, covered the college's strategic plan, the teaching of groups of students with mixed ability and the provision of additional learning support. The conference in 1995 was attended by 67 staff and was well received.

71 Staff-development needs are identified through an established appraisal scheme. All full-time teachers are appraised annually by their line manager. The process includes observation of teachers' work in the classroom and feedback on their performance. Part-time teachers are observed soon after appointment and at least once every two years. All college staff are entitled to free attendance of up to four hours a week on college courses. This training has enabled some to gain qualifications, such as NVQs; National Examining Board for Supervisory Management awards; health and safety and first aid qualifications. Teachers without teaching qualifications are encouraged to participate in the college's teacher training course at stage 1 and then undertake further external training. Thirty-two are currently undergoing training. About five or six people a year are allocated 50 per cent of the costs of undertaking further degrees and other qualifications. A small number of teachers have taken advantage of placements in industry. There is an induction programme for all new staff which takes place on Saturdays in the autumn and spring terms. It is also delivered through an open learning pack for those who are unable to attend. The college's commitment to quality and the development of its staff has been recognised by the attainment of the Investors in People award.

72 The college's self-assessment report was produced after consultation with senior managers and was approved by the academic board. It addresses each of the aspects of Council Circular 93/28, *Assessing Achievement* in tabular form under the headings: strengths, issues requiring action, planned improvements and evidence. It is descriptive rather than evaluative but it specifies action needed for improvements. It is an open and honest document and its findings correlate fairly closely with the findings of the inspection.

RESOURCES

Staffing

73 The college employs 148 full-time equivalent teaching staff, of whom almost two-thirds are part-time sessional teachers. Teachers are well qualified academically and have relevant commercial experience. Of the full-time and fractional staff, 75 per cent have degrees, 33 per cent have higher degrees, and 81 per cent have teaching qualifications; of the part-time sessional staff, 60 per cent have degrees, 15 per cent have higher degrees, and 65 per cent have teaching qualifications. Twenty-one per cent of full-time and fractional staff have achieved Training and Development Lead Body assessor and verifier qualifications.

74 The many sessional teachers employed by the college bring valuable current industrial and professional experience to the classroom. For example, in art and design, many of the part-time staff have established reputations and considerable accomplishments, and continue to practise as professionals in parallel with their teaching roles. In courses for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities there are a number of staff teaching British sign language who use British sign language as a first language. A class for students with severe learning difficulties is taught by a professional dance teacher. As a consequence of employing so many part-time teachers, full-time teachers have to take on a considerable load of supervisory and administrative responsibilities. Difficulties have arisen in providing adequate administrative cover for full-time staff in the event of their absence.

75 In addition to teachers, there are a further 23 full-time equivalent staff who support direct learning and 71 other support staff; the majority of these are full-time or fractional post holders. The level of technical and administrative support is poor in some curriculum areas, although useful support is provided centrally to teaching staff through the learning resources staff. In art and design there is a serious lack of technician support. Staff have to undertake many of the tasks which could be done by technicians and courses lack the specialist input which technicians could give. In hairdressing, the level of technician support is adequate, and in catering most practical classes are adequately supported by kitchen assistants.

Equipment/learning resources

76 The standard of specialist equipment varies; it is poor in a number of significant areas, to the detriment of the learning process. In art and design, there are few examples of good-quality equipment, except that used in the photography studio. Equipment for work in jewellery and stained glass is inadequate. Some larger items, like the circular saw and thickness planer in the furniture and woodwork room at Hortensia, were either out of order or unreliable. Some important items, such as a millinery oven, are not provided at all and even basic items of equipment, such as gas torches, are not provided in sufficient quantities for the numbers on the course. The cafe at the Wornington Centre has been developed as a future teaching and learning resource and is satisfactorily equipped to be representative of a commercial coffee shop operation. In business, students do not have access to modern office equipment, such as faxes, copiers, and electronic mail. For students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities only basic equipment is available, and some teaching is hampered by the lack of specialist equipment. In modern languages, there is sufficient material to deliver the courses, although the condition of some of the equipment, and access to it, are unsatisfactory. In health care and hairdressing there is a good range of equipment, both in the salons and classrooms. In catering the standard of equipment is generally good and

there have been some recent purchases and the specialist facilities have been upgraded.

77 The college's budget for the purchase of equipment for the current year has risen from £115,219 in 1994-95 to £196,520 with a substantial contribution from external funding. The sum of £16,623 is allocated for the library and resources areas. The major capital purchase planned for this year is computer equipment for educational purposes. Open learning and study areas have been opened recently on two of the sites but these are small and provide study spaces for only about 30 students, a ratio of one to approximately 100 full-time equivalent students. These facilities are poorly stocked; they hold 6,000 books and 40 periodical titles, and a small number of tapes and compact disk read-only memory (CD-ROM) databases. In art and design reference materials are limited and none are available on loan. The small collection of publications held in several of the workshops has been built up by tutors. The range of materials and specialist text books for catering students is limited. There are no library facilities for evening students of English as a foreign language at the Holland Park centre.

78 The college is still in the process of developing its plan for information technology. Computers are available on only two of the daytime sites. There are currently 119 machines available for educational use, a ratio of one to approximately 25 full-time equivalent students. Moreover, 53 of these are old machines, and most of the more modern machines do not have hard disks. Only 11 machines are available on open access. In addition to the equipment owned by the college, students have access to computers at the Holland Park evening centre at Holland Park School, and the Nottingdale Technology Centre, which is funded by the voluntary sector. In business, there is a new network of computers offering up-to-date versions of the most popular commercial packages. Within the information technology provision, some resources are in need of upgrading. In particular, the suites on two sites and the electronics unit of the course are inadequately resourced. In art and design, there is virtually no information technology equipment in studio or workshop areas. There is insufficient support for those students using the very limited provision within the resources areas. There is no computer in the hairdressing suite and no appropriate software available to students.

Accommodation

79 The quality of teaching accommodation varies, but most is well maintained and of an acceptable standard. Most of the studios and workshops used for art and design benefit from natural light. However, some are too cramped for the purposes for which they are used, including those used for millinery and furniture. Many of the classrooms are too small for use as studios by more than seven or eight students. Throughout the areas used for practical work, there is a serious shortage of suitably located storage accommodation. Much of the art accommodation is drab.

Some of the larger workshops are used, inappropriately, for specialist courses for which they were not equipped or designed. There is a large, newly-decorated hall at one centre which provides a good display area for students' work. In catering, much work has been done to make the former school buildings more attractive to adults and to provide an inviting and stimulating environment for students. However, the shortage of space for food preparation and cooking restricts curriculum development and any further increase in student numbers. Many rooms that are accessible to wheelchair users have furnishings which can be easily moved. Students of drama and dance at the Wornington centre have a large performance area with a sprung dance floor. The accommodation for health care and hairdressing is generally good. There is a good modern salon and dedicated base rooms for caring courses. Business courses are offered on three of the sites; the decor and location of most of the accommodation are pleasant with clean, tidy and spacious classrooms. However, there is no training office which means that students cannot practise skills in a realistic setting. Most of the classrooms used for the teaching of English and modern languages provide a pleasant environment for learning.

80 Access for students or staff using wheelchairs is, in effect, only available on two of the sites where it is restricted to the ground floor. The social facilities provided for students are limited. There are canteens on three of the sites but these are small, seating in total 95 people. In addition, an area seating about 50 people is available to evening students at Holland Park School. There are no student common rooms and no sports facilities on any of the sites, apart from Holland Park School where timetabled classes take place in the swimming pool and gymnasias in the evening.

CONCLUSIONS AND ISSUES

81 Kensington and Chelsea College is making good progress towards achieving its mission. The particular strengths of the college are:

- well-qualified staff who are generally sensitive to the needs of adult learners
- good relationships between staff and students that are generally relaxed, positive and respectful
- tutors who provide good support for students, including many part-time evening students
- a commitment to supporting staff and encouraging staff development, including part-time staff
- a wide range of academic, vocational and adult education programmes
- effective links with community and voluntary organisations
- a committed governing body, working effectively with the college management

-
- a careful programme for strategic planning which includes extensive consultation of all concerned
 - an emphasis on obtaining and responding to students' views
 - a linked programme of staff appraisal and staff development which includes observation of teaching.

82 If the college is to improve the quality of its provision further, the following issues should be addressed:

- the need for further development of the management information system
- the lack of a formal system for the accreditation of students' prior learning
- unclear progression routes from some courses
- course reviews that are of variable quality and which monitor standards different from those set in the charter
- poor-quality specialist equipment in a number of areas and a lack of up-to-date equipment for information technology
- limited technical support in some curriculum areas
- shortage of space in some areas such as millinery, furniture and food studies
- lack of access on all but two sites for wheelchair users
- aims of some courses for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are unclear.

FIGURES

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- 1 Percentage enrolments by age (1995-96)

 - 2 Percentage enrolments by level of study (1995-96)

 - 3 Enrolments by mode of attendance and curriculum area (1995-96)

 - 4 Staff profile – staff expressed as full-time equivalents (1995-96)

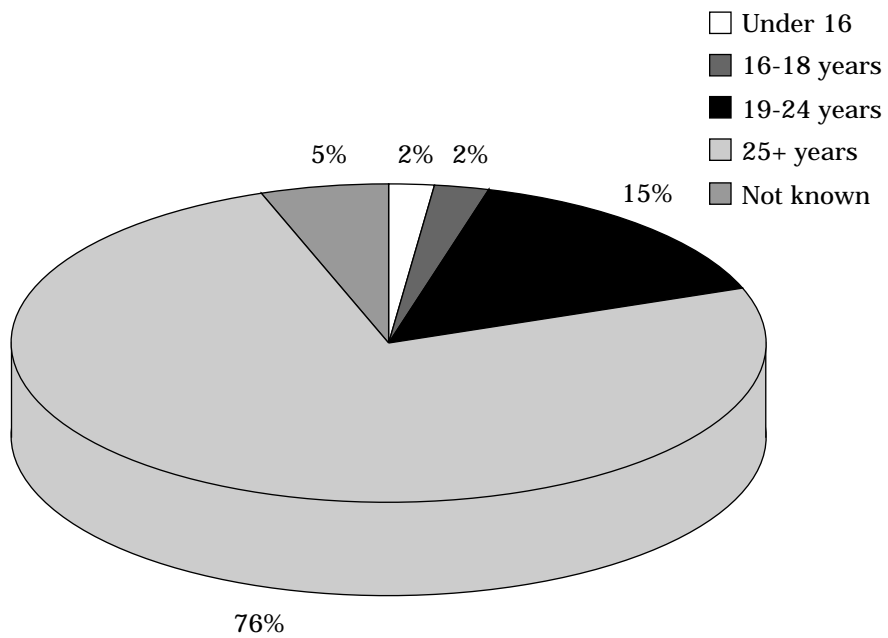
 - 5 Income (for 12 months to July 1995)

 - 6 Expenditure (for 12 months to July 1995)

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

Figure 1

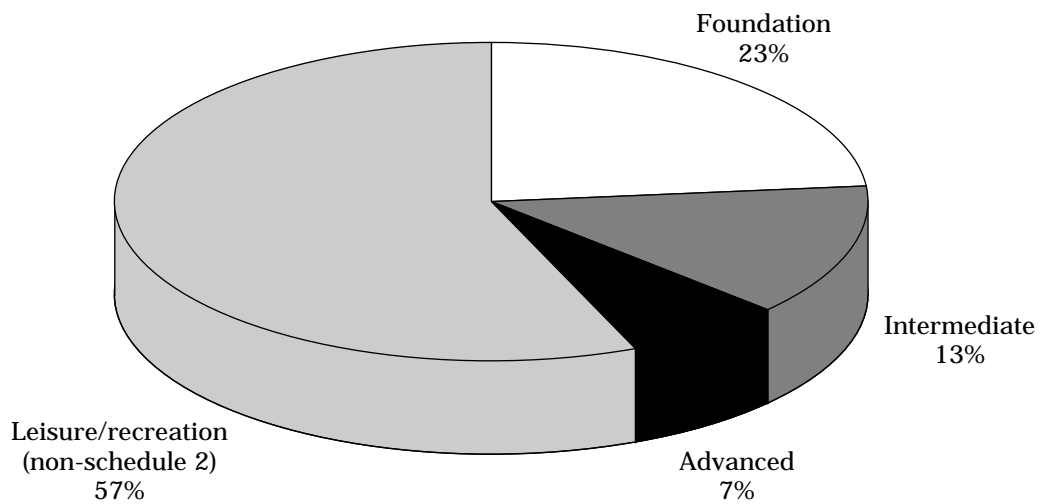
Kensington and Chelsea College: percentage enrolments by age (1995-96)



Enrolments: 17,353

Figure 2

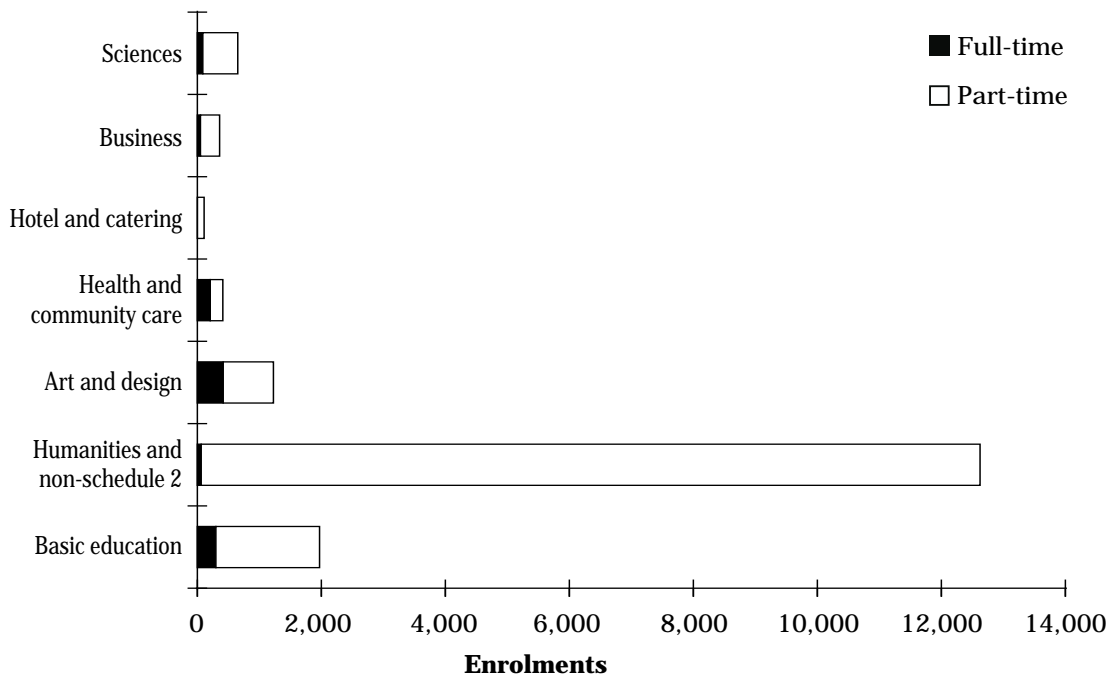
Kensington and Chelsea College: percentage enrolments by level of study (1995-96)



Enrolments: 17,353

Figure 3

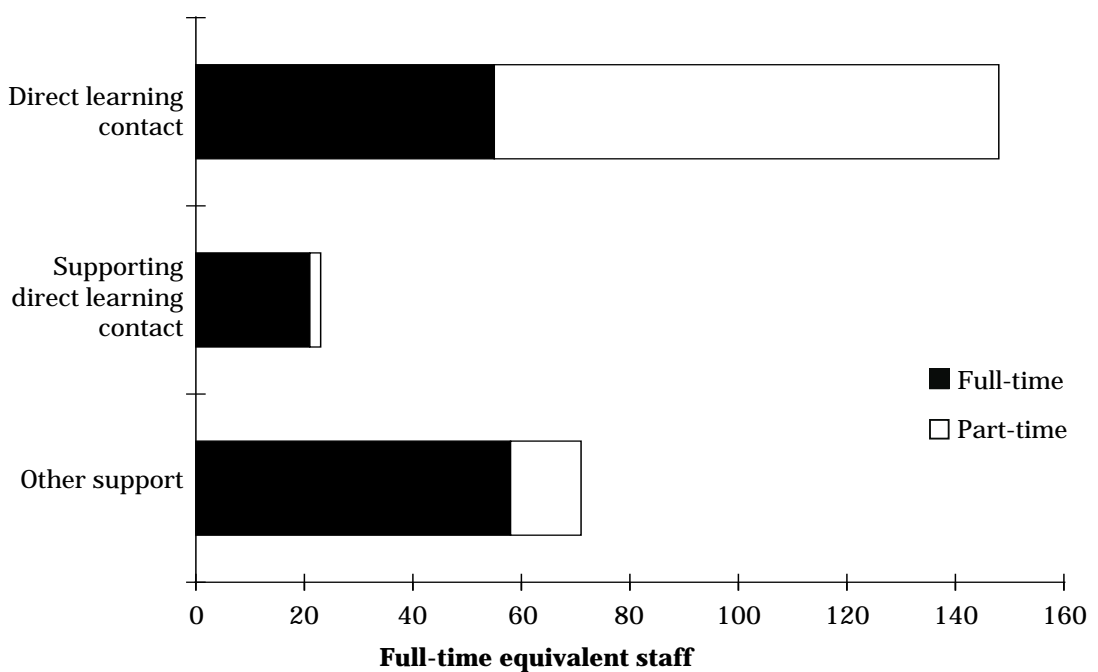
Kensington and Chelsea College: enrolments by mode of attendance and curriculum area (1995-96)



Enrolments: 17,353

Figure 4

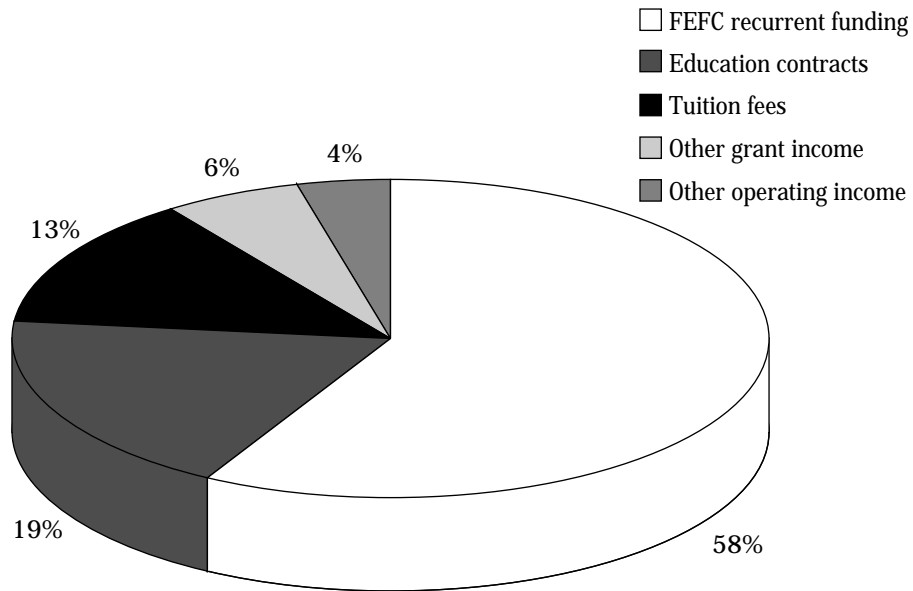
Kensington and Chelsea College: staff profile - staff expressed as full-time equivalents (1995-96)



Full-time equivalent staff: 242

Figure 5

Kensington and Chelsea College: income (for 12 months to July 1995)

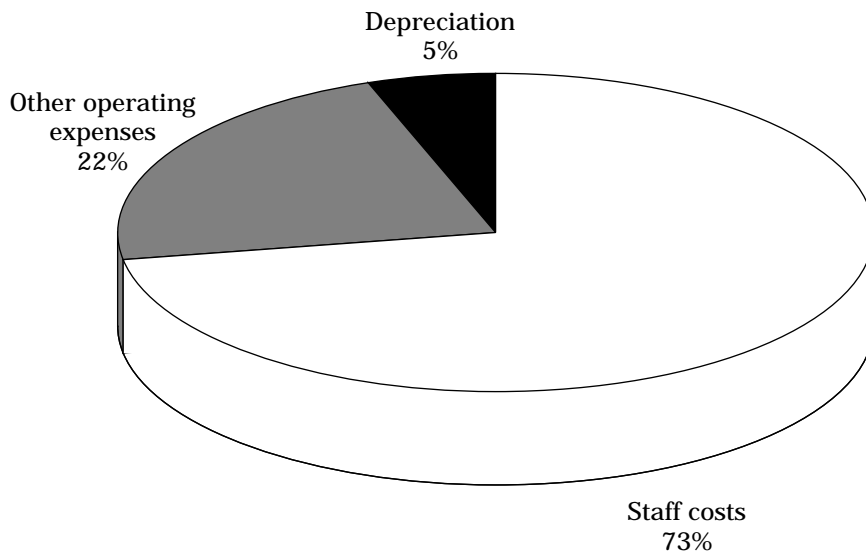


Income: £5,820,000

Note: this chart excludes £16,000 capital grants and £23,000 other income-generating activities.

Figure 6

Kensington and Chelsea College: expenditure (for 12 months to July 1995)



Expenditure: £6,030,000

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