

**REPORT  
FROM THE  
INSPECTORATE**

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# **Kingston Maurward College**

**March 1996**

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**THE  
FURTHER  
EDUCATION  
FUNDING  
COUNCIL**

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FUNDING COUNCIL**

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

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

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## **GRADE DESCRIPTORS**

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

*The descriptors for the grades are:*

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

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

### **College grade profiles 1993-95**

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

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# FEFC INSPECTION REPORT 39/96

**KINGSTON MAURWARD COLLEGE**

**SOUTH WEST REGION**

**Inspected September-December 1995**

## Summary

Kingston Maurward College in Dorset specialises in providing education and training in land-based industries. It also offers a significant range of part-time computing courses. The college has many strengths including an increasing range of full-time courses, high-quality teaching and learning and extensive links with the community, employers and schools. The corporation board members are enthusiastic and well informed about the issues facing the college. Performance indicators, including retention and destination information, are collected systematically. Course tutors are fully involved in the recruitment, guidance and support of students and give appropriate attention to induction, tutorial support, learning support and ensure the regular attendance of students. A comprehensive quality assurance system has been developed. Other strengths include the high level of motivation shown by staff. Accommodation, the specialist equipment and the attention given to health and safety is of high quality. Weaknesses include: the limited provision at foundation level; the lack of opportunities for students to progress to higher education; no provision for open learning; the monitoring and review of equal opportunities; the absence of formal counselling and careers advisory services; inconsistencies in the implementation of some quality assurance procedures; and shortcomings in the college charter document.

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

<b>Aspects of cross-college provision</b>		<b>Grade</b>
Responsiveness and range of provision		2
Governance and management		2
Students' recruitment, guidance and support		2
Quality assurance		2
Resources:	staffing	2
	equipment/learning resources	1
	accommodation	1

<b>Curriculum area</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Curriculum area</b>	<b>Grade</b>
Computing and business	2	Agriculture, animal care and equine studies	2
		Horticulture, countryside and outdoor leisure	2

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## **INTRODUCTION**

1 Kingston Maurward College, Dorset, was inspected between September and December 1995. A team of nine inspectors spent a total of 46 days in the college. Inspectors visited 53 classes, examined samples of students' work and held discussions with governors, parents, staff and students. Inspectors attended meetings of the corporation board and the finance subcommittee. They also met representatives of local employers, schools, the community and Dorset Training and Enterprise Council (TEC).

## **THE COLLEGE AND ITS AIMS**

2 The college was established in 1949 by Dorset County Council as the county centre for land-based industries. The present college is located on one site at Kingston Maurward, approximately two miles from the centre of Dorchester. Administrative and teaching staff, the computer department, some social facilities for students, the college restaurant and the conference centre are housed within Kingston Maurward House, a grade I listed building. Other teaching and administrative accommodation is located in converted farm buildings and a variety of permanent and temporary accommodation. The 330 hectare estate includes the college farm, woodland, water courses and wildlife habitats, all providing important teaching resources. Facilities open to the public include the grade II\* listed college gardens and the farm animal park. In 1995, these facilities attracted over 12,000 visitors. The college accommodates approximately 55 students in its own residential facilities.

3 In November 1995, there were 1,373 enrolments, of which 29 per cent were full time. Enrolments by age, by level of study and by mode of attendance and curriculum area are shown in figures 1, 2 and 3, respectively. The college employs 106 full-time equivalent staff, of whom 35 are teachers. A staff profile, with staff expressed as full-time equivalents, is shown in figure 4.

4 There are four further education sector colleges within Dorset. Most direct competition is with other specialist land-based industry colleges, the nearest of which are Cannington College, 55 miles to the north-west, and Bicton College, 50 miles to the west. There is some provision for land-based industry courses at Yeovil College, 25 miles to the north-west, working in conjunction with Cannington College. The computing and business provision is in direct competition with Weymouth College, eight miles to the south, and Bournemouth and Poole College of Further Education, 20 miles to the east. In 1995, 96 per cent of the college's students were resident in the county of Dorset.

5 The college's senior management team comprises the principal, two heads of department, the director of studies and the head of finance and administration. The department of agriculture runs courses in agriculture, machinery, animal care and equine studies. The department of horticulture runs courses in horticulture, countryside, leisure and

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recreational studies, and construction. The responsibilities of the director of studies include library and learning resources, staff development, quality systems, the department of computing and business, and work funded by the Dorset TEC. The head of department of horticulture has management responsibility for the running of the estate. The college farm manager and the domestic and conference manager report directly to the principal.

6 The college's mission is concerned with educating and training people who are involved with the natural environment, the countryside and land-based industries. It aims to provide high-quality and cost-effective courses, together with services and facilities to meet the needs of the community and employers. Other priorities set out in the strategic plan include maintaining the college's buildings, gardens and parklands as a community and tourist amenity and developing links with schools, rural businesses and other community organisations. Within the strategic plan emphasis is placed upon promoting equality of opportunity and further training and development for staff.

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

7 The college has grown substantially since 1990 and currently offers a total of 16 full-time and 64 part-time programmes. There are full-time intermediate and advanced level courses in agriculture, horticulture, animal care, countryside management, countryside skills and horse studies. General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQs) in leisure and tourism, geared towards careers in outdoor leisure, were introduced in September 1995. Part-time courses include National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) in agriculture, horticulture, arboriculture, countryside skills, engineering, agricultural machinery and animal care and horse studies. Approximately 1,000 students each year enrol on part-time wordprocessing and information technology programmes.

8 The college is an associate of Bournemouth University. Some Kingston Maurward College staff contribute to the teaching of the University's heritage conservation degree, but there are currently no links of direct benefit to college students. There are no formal contacts with other higher education institutions. The college does not offer any full-time or part-time higher education courses and there are very few opportunities for students to proceed to higher level study of land-based industries elsewhere in the county.

9 Relations with Dorset TEC are positive. The college's Kingston Maurward Training Unit provides youth training and adult training courses for over 250 students in a range of land-based industries. A foundation programme prepares students with learning difficulties to progress on to the main youth training programme. Entry to all these courses is tied to the start of the college year and the TEC would welcome greater flexibility from the college in accepting enrolments and leavers at other times of the year. There are no facilities within the college for students to study at home or through occasional attendance at college.

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10 An extensive network of contacts with the local community enables the college to identify training needs and market trends. Advisory boards with representation from local employers cover all areas of college provision. Staff and governors have wide-ranging local connections. Many staff give lectures to local clubs and societies, for example, to local horticultural societies. Several other local groups with interests in land-based industries, including the National Farmers' Union, use college premises for meetings. Part-time courses are well supported by local and regional employers, such as district councils and the National Trust. Other local employers, including schools and the armed forces, have used the college for computer training.

11 The college and its courses are actively promoted. A wide range of prospectuses and leaflets is produced in a consistent style. The college also contributes, in conjunction with Weymouth College, a regular feature page in the local press on college activities. Imaginative use is made of the college's environment to attract the public and inform them of college activities. The college generates substantial income through conference work and the use of its premises for weddings, fairs and concerts. Full-time students can attend conference and community events held at the college free of charge and this provides a valuable addition to formal teaching.

12 Links with schools are extensive. Representatives of schools interviewed by inspectors were positive about the speed of the college's response to requests for information and the quality of the support provided. The college development officer liaises with two local consortia involving 12 secondary schools, together with Weymouth College. Marketing of the college and its courses takes a number of forms and includes an annual open day, taster days, organisation of activities to cater for school parties and attendance at careers events. Many schools visit the gardens and estate to undertake project work. College staff work with several local schools in the provision of land-based industry work including for example, NVQ level 2 in engineering and the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) in rural studies.

13 There are effective links with five special schools in the area. The college supports their work by providing access to facilities as well as staff to train students in a range of practical land-based skills. Schools value the opportunities provided. However, at present there is no full-time college course at foundation level for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

14 The college assists with The Dorset Training Group by providing a co-ordinator. The group runs on-site and off-site training for employers who are group members in safety, animal care, countryside and woodland, general skills, horticulture and management. Four training organisers, funded through subscriptions from employers, work within the county. They carry college literature and encourage members of the agricultural and horticultural workforce to work towards NVQ accreditation.



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15 The college has an equal opportunities policy. However, responsibility for implementing the policy is not formally allocated and there is no system for its monitoring and review. Gender imbalances on some courses have been identified, but there are no agreed strategies to address this issue.

16 There is some contact with overseas countries. Study tours are undertaken by second-year diploma students to France and Eire. There are briefings by tutors on overseas employment opportunities and, occasionally, work placements are arranged abroad. There is a very small number of overseas students enrolled on college courses. There are no opportunities for English speaking students to continue with languages learned at school.

## **GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT**

17 The corporation board has 16 members drawn from a wide range of relevant professional and business backgrounds. There are four members of staff on the board, including the principal. The farm manager and the director of studies are co-opted members. The principal's secretary acts as clerk to the corporation. One lay member is currently acting as college chaplain pending an appointment to fill the vacancy. Although there is a student representative on the governors' facilities committee, there is no student representation on the main board.

18 The governors, through the main board and subcommittees, work closely with the principal and the senior management team to achieve college objectives. Corporation board members are aware of the major issues facing the college and have encouraged improvements in operation and supported the promotion of income-generating activities.

19 All governors are assigned to at least one of six governing body subcommittees. These committees are finance, audit, farm, staffing, premises and facilities. With the exception of the finance committee, which meets monthly, all other subcommittees meet three or four times a year. With the exception of the audit committee, college staff have been co-opted as members of all subcommittees. Committees liaise closely with each other. The chairman of the corporation is kept fully apprised of the financial position through close liaison with the chair of the finance subcommittee and the principal.

20 Although present arrangements have served the corporation board well, a working party has now been set up to review a number of issues including the corporation's standing orders and the recruitment and selection procedures for new board members. The review will provide the opportunity to consider the induction and integration processes for new members.

21 The senior management team, comprising the principal, the two heads of department, the director of studies and the head of finance and administration, meets weekly. The small size of the college allows for

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effective informal daily exchange of information between managers and staff. Reporting relationships and individual responsibilities are understood. Regular newsletters and whole staff meetings help to keep staff informed of current issues. Support staff are not adequately represented in the college committee structure.

22 There are sound arrangements for the effective deployment of resources. Budget holders receive monthly financial reports. Course tutors have considerable autonomy in their role of managing the curriculum and students. Continued review and monitoring of their responsibilities should ensure that continued college growth can be maintained.

23 Major policies are in place and responsibilities are clearly allocated in relation to matters such as health and safety, the environment and student support. In particular, the college health and safety policy is well documented and it is implemented effectively. Monitoring of health and safety is strongly supported by the corporation board; a member of the governing body sits on the college health and safety committee.

24 Strategic planning is a significant part of the work of the academic board. The academic board membership comprises the senior management team. This does not allow staff at different levels in the organisation to contribute directly to the strategic planning process.

25 The college's average level of funding for 1995-96 is £18.78 per unit. The median for agricultural and horticultural colleges is £23.15. The college's estimated income and expenditure for the 12 month period to July 1996 are shown in figures 5 and 6.

26 The lack of a fully-integrated management information system limits the amount of accurate student information available to managers and governors for monitoring and control purposes. A new system is currently being implemented and there are early signs that this will remedy most of the current shortcomings.

27 Student enrolment targets are set and agreed during the strategic planning cycle. The last three years' targets have been met. Retention rates and destinations of full-time students are systematically collected through existing college systems. Reasons for students leaving courses early are analysed and steps have been taken to look at a range of college procedures, including student selection, which may affect this. Destinations show good progression rates into jobs and further education. The college is examining how it can encourage more students to progress to higher education.

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

28 The admissions process is shared between the staff of the student record office and course tutors. This sharing of responsibility has significant benefits. The student records office maintains a database of

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full-time applicants and provides printouts of applicants and their progress through the admissions procedure. Course tutors conduct interviews for all full-time students and for those part-time applicants who require guidance. A form is completed by course tutors following each interview. Part-time students can enrol by post and may pay by credit card. The student records office sends out information packs containing details of courses, fees and grants, and transport to students who have been offered places. Later in the year students receive joining instructions.

29 Course tutors play a significant part in overseeing the progress of students. As well as interviewing, their responsibilities include induction arrangements, tutorial support, general careers guidance and counselling. Students expressed a high level of satisfaction with the quality of individual support received. However, there are wide variations in the approaches adopted by individual tutors and there is limited written guidance to support them in undertaking induction and tutorial activities.

30 All full-time students, and some part-time students, follow a general college induction programme which includes an introductory talk by the principal and briefings on college facilities, health and safety, learning support and social arrangements. A checklist specifies the minimum list of induction activities. Students receive further induction from course tutors which includes information on course content and methods of assessment. Library induction is arranged separately.

31 On full-time courses, the course tutors act as personal tutors. On average, students receive a one-to-one tutorial every four weeks. Both course-related and other personal issues affecting progress may be discussed during tutorials and a record form is completed after each meeting. As part of their monitoring role, heads of departments read tutorial records during the year. Course tutors on part-time courses provide individual support within the limited time available. Reports on students' progress are prepared twice a year and, in the case of full-time 16 to 18 year old students, reports are sent to parents. All students, and the group of parents interviewed by inspectors, spoke positively about the role of the course tutors in providing support and help as required.

32 The senior warden helps to organise sporting and social activities, and liaises with the student committee drawn from representatives of all courses. On Wednesday afternoons most courses are timetabled free to allow students to engage in alternative activities. The range of activities on offer is narrow. There are college teams in hockey, football and rugby and there are opportunities to participate in some visits. There is no broader base of clubs and societies.

33 Careers guidance and advice is available from the course tutor, the careers section of the library, and the Dorset Careers Guidance Service. In practice, it is expected that the specialist knowledge and experience of course tutors will provide an important source of information. Within the library, the careers section includes college prospectuses, Universities and

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Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) guides and a job vacancy file. Students expressed some dissatisfaction with the careers guidance provided. For example, a significant number of second-year students had not yet had the opportunity to discuss their future career plans.

34 There is no college counsellor. One of the team of four college wardens has some training in counselling skills and all wardens have adequate training in first aid, self-defence and drugs awareness. There are no direct contacts with external counselling agencies. In the event of a crisis, wardens have either attempted to cope themselves or referred to parents, police or the Samaritans. The college does not separately identify students who are living locally in lodgings. Some of these are known to be 16 to 18 year olds but there is no regular procedure for extending support to them, other than that which can be provided through the tutorial system.

35 A learning support manager has been appointed recently. All new full-time students are now given the Basic Skills Agency diagnostic assessment test for literacy and numeracy during the induction programme. Most of those who were identified as needing further support are now following an agreed programme of activities.

36 Some students bring with them records of achievement. There is no college policy which encourages them to continue updating and improving these. As an alternative, course tutors make use of assessments completed at college to produce charts of grades achieved, of attendance records and tutorial record forms.

37 There is a strong awareness of the importance of regular attendance among both staff and students. Course tutors take responsibility for maintaining accurate and up-to-date registers of attendance and punctuality. A system is in place to record and remedy student absence; continued poor attendance has resulted in students being asked to leave.

38 The college has some students with learning difficulties, restricted mobility or visual impairment. Some steps have been taken to support these students, for example, through the construction of a ramp in the horticulture unit so wheelchair users may gain access to the glasshouses.

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

39 Most of the teaching observed had more strengths than weaknesses. Of the 53 teaching sessions inspected, 77 per cent had strengths which outweighed weaknesses and less than 4 per cent had weaknesses which outweighed strengths.

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**Teaching sessions: inspection grades by programme of study**

<b>Programmes</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>Totals</b>
GNVQ		1	1	0	0	0	2
NVQ		4	4	4	1	0	13
Other*		14	17	6	1	0	38
<b>Total</b>		<b>19</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>53</b>

*\*includes BTEC first and national diplomas and certificates in animal care, countryside and horse studies, national diplomas and certificates in horticulture and agriculture, and computer literacy qualifications.*

40 Teaching is generally well planned. On some courses, for example the national certificate in horticulture, course handbooks were of a high standard and included detailed information on syllabuses, assessments and staffing. Many schemes of work included the proposed content, teaching methods and time allocations for particular activities. In all cases staff had established good relationships with students. As a result, students were generally willing to respond to questions in class and were confident about approaching their teacher for further information or guidance. Written work set by teachers is appropriate and is marked and returned to students promptly. Errors in the content of written work are sometimes corrected in detail but, overall, there was little attention given to improving the standard of presentation, or of improving students' written communication skills.

41 Most of the courses offered within the computing and business department involve the practical use of computers and require attendance for a regular three-hour slot each week. Provision is made for additional unsupervised practice on two afternoons during the week. The majority of students are adults following basic computer literacy or wordprocessing courses. All teachers were confident in their knowledge of computers. Teachers have worked together to produce sets of class exercises for the most popular courses and this ensures consistency in style and quality of teaching. Students worked at their own pace through these exercises with individual guidance and demonstrations of new functions from the teacher. Occasionally, demonstrations were too long and students lost concentration. Students were well motivated and were generally making rapid and confident progress in their computing skills. Most students kept neat records of work which they had completed.

42 Classroom teaching in agriculture, animal care and equine studies is up to date and provides a thorough base of theoretical knowledge. Appropriate emphasis is placed on health and safety, animal welfare, current business practice and relevant legislation. Agriculture and animal care students are able to make effective use of the college farm, animal care units and the wider estate for relevant practical work and this increases their understanding of the links between theory and practice. Information on farm activities and performance has recently been made

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available to all students. Practical work with animals and machinery is a particular strength of these courses. For example, in one session which was linked to a previous demonstration activity, agricultural students undertook a series of maintenance checks on tractors and their individual performance was assessed by the teacher. There were occasional weaknesses in teaching including poor class control, a lack of student involvement and, in one case, a lack of appropriate support for practical work for a student with learning difficulties.

43 GNVQ leisure and tourism courses have an outdoor leisure focus. The teaching was challenging and made good use of local examples and the relevant experience of students. Students attend Weymouth Outdoor Education Centre on one day a week to develop a range of skills including sailing, canoeing, caving and expedition skills. In developing these skills, students set their own targets for performance in conjunction with their instructors. Team building and group work is a successful feature of these courses.

44 Horticulture and countryside courses include work in garden design, floristry and construction. The teaching is of a consistently high standard. In many sessions teachers incorporated a variety of activities and used challenging questions to ensure that students understood the work. Effective use was made of examples drawn from industry. Subject matter was carefully presented. For example, a lecture on chemical weed control included how and when to apply the relevant chemical in the environment. Practical work was adapted to meet the needs of individual students. Students demonstrated appropriate attention to health and safety. Effective use is made of college facilities. For example, on the national diploma in countryside management students make use of the college's visitor centre for the business elements of their course. Achievement of practical skills in horticulture is of a high standard with effective use of the ornamental gardens, parkland, project plots and areas for dry stone walling.

## **STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENTS**

45 The vast majority of students are highly motivated and show a strong commitment to their chosen course of study. Part-time students in computing and horticulture in particular, talk enthusiastically about the college and its courses. Attendance by students at sessions observed during the inspection averaged 89 per cent.

46 Specialist knowledge and understanding shown by students in written work is generally appropriate for the level of course. Work submitted by students on computing courses is of good quality, generally error-free and produced to tight deadlines. Written work on animal care courses is well presented and makes effective use of information technology. On agriculture courses and first level horticultural and countryside programmes, the overall standards of presentation and literacy are lower.

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47 Achievements in computing and business are generally good. In 1994-95, 88 per cent of the 920 students who enrolled on the department's programmes completed their studies. Results in RSA Examinations Board (RSA) wordprocessing examinations were good, with an overall pass rate of 81 per cent and 57 per cent of entrants achieving at distinction level. The numbers of students achieving three modules of the RSA computer literacy and information technology examination has reduced from 92 per cent in 1993 to 64 per cent in 1995.

48 Results for full-time courses in horticulture and countryside vary. The two largest courses, the national certificate in horticulture and the national diploma in countryside management had pass rates of 82 per cent and 87 per cent, respectively. On part-time courses there are some good results. For example, NVQ level 2 in amenity horticulture, City and Guilds of London Institute (C&G) creative flower arranging and C&G phase 3 in garden design all achieved a 100 per cent pass rate in 1994-95. College students have been successful in gaining top national awards from the C&G with three awards for horticulture in 1994 and two awards in horticulture and another in garden design in 1995.

49 Within agriculture, animal care and equine work in 1994-95, pass rates of 100 per cent were achieved in the national diploma in agriculture and the national diploma in animal care. On other full-time courses within the department pass rates varied, for example, on the first diploma in animal care and on the first diploma in horse studies there were pass rates of 76 per cent and 93 per cent, respectively. The overall pass rate for the first diploma in agriculture was poor (36 per cent). On part-time courses, 100 per cent pass rates were achieved in farm and dairy management programmes.

50 In 1994-95, the overall retention rate for full-time students was 83 per cent. Across all full-time courses, 214 students completed their courses. Of these, 24 per cent, including a substantial number of students on first diploma programmes, enrolled on another further education course. Seven per cent of students, including several from the national diploma in countryside management course, progressed to full-time higher education in heritage management, environmental science, horticulture and agriculture. Ten per cent entered employment not directly related to their course. Forty-eight per cent of students were successful in obtaining employment within the land-based industry sector, mostly within the county of Dorset. Jobs obtained by students varied widely but included work on farms and in gardens, conservation work and landscape contracting. The destinations of 11 per cent of full-time students are unknown.

#### **QUALITY ASSURANCE**

51 The college has documented its quality assurance procedures in a manual called Kingston Maurward Systems. The manual comprises 15 procedures in areas which include course management and review, staff

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selection review and academic planning. The procedures are well known and used by staff, but have not been formally approved by the corporation board. Staff are able to recommend modifications to existing procedures and to propose new ones. Over a period of 18 months, 43 improvements were proposed and all but one were accepted. Manuals are widely distributed throughout the organisation and are held by designated post holders. The Kingston Maurward Training Unit uses a subset of college procedures specifically to meet the requirements of Dorset TEC.

52 Use of the documentation at course level is variable. For example, course review procedures do not always result in action plans which clearly set out improvements, responsibilities and a timetable for implementation. Review reports do not include a critical analysis of course content or the effectiveness of the teaching. There is little input from employers. Course review procedures relating to full-time and part-time courses for 1995 have been internally audited, but as yet a corrective action plan resulting from this has not been written.

53 Targets are set for enrolments in consultation with course tutors. College retention targets and success targets, at 90 per cent and 75 per cent, respectively, for 1995, are set by the college management team. Monitoring is undertaken to assess the college's progress towards the achievement of the targets. There are few standards and targets identified for other aspects of college services. Reports which include statistical information about enrolments, retention and examination passes are prepared and submitted to the academic board and the corporation. There is no formal mechanism for providing feedback to course teams on the outcomes of the course review process.

54 Students' views are sought through a comprehensive system of student surveys. Surveys have been used to consult with students before major improvements are carried out, for example, to the library and to the restaurant. However, there have been delays in drawing up action points in response to the college's summer 1995 student survey.

55 Course files which contain key course information within a central document are rigorously maintained by each course team. Files follow a standard format of 14 sections and include information on course management, timetables of assessments to be given, work experience arrangements and tutorial records.

56 The college has stated a commitment to the Investors in People standard and will be assessed for the first time in 1996. There is a staff-appraisal scheme for all full-time and substantial part-time staff which is linked to staff-development activity. Interviews are held annually and individual objectives and training needs for the year are agreed. The final page of the staff review form identifies the planned activities and a copy is passed to the director of studies. The appraisal scheme is generally accepted by staff, although not all of them have undertaken training as appraisees. A college level staff-development plan is drawn up by the college management team. It includes needs identified at a senior



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level and the results of the annual staff-appraisal interviews. Lists of training needs identified for this year include GNVQ assessor and verifier training and technical updating. Part-time staff with a substantial teaching load participate in staff development and all part-time staff are able to attend a college-based course on methods of teaching and learning.

57 All new staff undergo a thorough induction procedure. The system identifies the appointee's manager or supervisor as the mentor for the period of induction. The process is supported by a checklist which covers 36 points. On completion of the induction, both the new staff member and the mentor sign to confirm that all points have been covered.

58 The college has prepared a self-assessment report which follows the headings in Council Circular 93/28, *Assessing Achievement*. The report was written by the principal with some involvement of the senior management team. The document provided useful background information about the college and its systems, but there was no clear identification of strengths and weaknesses or points for action.

59 There is a brief students' charter, which does not satisfactorily address a number of issues. There is no identification of the quality of service which students, employers and others in the community can expect to receive. Students are informed where they may inspect a copy of the college's grievance procedures, but the procedures refer solely to the assessment of student work. The procedure to be followed in case of complaint is not set out and students are not informed of who they can contact if there are problems which cannot be resolved with the college. There is no formal system for monitoring the effectiveness of the charter or for undertaking its review.

## **RESOURCES**

### **Staffing**

60 College staff at all levels provide a friendly and efficient service to students and visitors. Teachers are adequately qualified for their current duties and most have appropriate industrial experience. Sixty per cent of full-time staff have a professional teaching qualification. Assessor awards have been achieved by 80 per cent of the full-time staff but no staff have yet achieved a formal qualification for internal verification. Many staff take and have successfully undertaken a short first aid course.

61 Part-time teachers provide specialist experience which supplements that of full-time teachers, for example, in flower arranging, botanical illustration, photography and first aid. They also contribute to new curriculum areas, for example, those of equine and animal care. Use of part-time teachers varies. Allocation of part-time staff within departments is 10 per cent in horticulture, 35 per cent in agriculture and 80 per cent in computing and business administration. New full-time appointments have been made to develop other areas such as GNVQs, where the leadership and management of a new staffing team has been set up successfully.

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62 Learning is well supported by competent instructors/technicians, many of whom carry out a high proportion of instructing hours. Instructors are used flexibly within their areas of experience and work well with other teaching staff. Most instructors/technicians have achieved or are working towards teaching and assessor awards. Other staff on the estate contribute to specific exercises on request. For example, the experience of the head gardener is used in discussions about the management of gardens and he also instructs in a number of skills, for example, in post and rail fencing.

63 Teachers and support staff are deployed flexibly in response to curriculum changes. For example, a livestock lecturer was recently retrained to teach animal care courses. When staff leave, jobs are reviewed to allow re-appraisal of areas of work and responsibilities.

64 Administrative and clerical staff are suitably experienced and qualified and have frequent short updating courses. These have included computer literacy and courses to familiarise staff with new management information and accounting systems.

### **Equipment/learning resources**

65 The ornamental grounds and parkland provide an outstanding range of plants and materials for practical classes. The experimental and demonstration work in the walled garden provide useful reference points for both students and visitors to the gardens. Glasshouse displays are attractively laid out when planted and orderly and well tended when housed on benching. All plants are well labelled. The horticulture covered work area in a purpose-built polytunnel provides a large clean workspace for practical work. The construction section is well equipped with a wide selection of tools.

66 The department of horticulture is very well equipped with horticultural machinery, including specialist arboricultural equipment, and there is a good selection of recently acquired up-to-date machines. Practical equipment is very well maintained. Some arboricultural practical sessions are held off campus to extend the students' experience as well as to maintain a supply of trees on the estate for pruning and felling.

67 The college farm represents a considerable resource which is utilised by many courses for practical teaching. Resources of the pig, sheep, dairy and crop enterprises provide real opportunities for the development and application of vocational skills in a working environment. The animal care facility is well run and houses a wide range of species, including exotic animals and birds.

68 The college makes careful use of the resources of the estate to maximise efficiency. For example, estate timber is used for student practical work in different ways. Recently, students constructed seats for the ornamental gardens.

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69 The learning resource centre is developing rapidly, although it still has some limitations. In some traditional areas of provision, stocks of books and journals are old or insufficient, for example, in topics related to fruit and vegetables. Paper-based library stock in newer areas, including outdoor sports and leisure work is good and sets of books in some practical skills areas, for example, hedging and dry stone walling, are appropriate. Five compact disk read-only memory (CD-ROM) databases with a small range of packages are available for student use. Staff and students speak favourably of the support provided by library staff and the dedication they show to their work.

70 Across the college there are approximately 60 modern computers with a range of standard software for use by students. Of these, 40 are used primarily by students enrolled on courses in the department of computing and business. This provides a well-equipped teaching facility. All full-time students receive basic tuition in information technology skills, but for completion of assignment work they rely primarily on 19 machines in the learning resource area. This area is available for students' use, outside of timetabled hours, for up to 15 hours per day. Currently there are no instances of overcrowding.

71 Weymouth Outdoor Education Centre is well equipped to support practical class activities. The centre is a short distance from Weymouth sea front. Considerable use is made of Dorset's natural landscape for climbing, sailing and caving activities. Equine facilities are provided at the nearby Ministry of Defence Bovington Saddle Club. These facilities are appropriate to meet the needs of current courses. The college plans to expand this provision and to build its own equitation centre in the near future.

### **Accommodation**

72 Kingston Maurward House is a grade 1 listed building and has been sensitively restored and maintained to maximise its potential as a pleasant working environment. Much of this work has been carried out recently. A series of computer rooms has been created on the second floor and these provide a welcoming environment. However, this floor is inaccessible for wheelchair users.

73 The Old Coach House Restaurant, which is adjacent to the main student common room and conference hall, has been imaginatively designed. It provides an appropriate facility for students, staff and visitors. Other student social areas include a billiard room and a television room. A new student union room and bar are currently under development.

74 Lettering on signposting is clear and in a style which fits in with the surroundings. Road access to the college has been improved recently with the introduction of a one-way system as part of the college development plan. Facilities for car parking have increased considerably.

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75 Parkland and grade II listed gardens provide a beautiful setting for the college buildings. The high standard of maintenance of the ornamental areas sets a good example for students in training and provides an attractive setting for visitors to the college gardens. A visitor reception centre, opened in the summer of 1995, has been established in conjunction with a plant centre and a farm animal unit to generate income and to act as a focus for visitors.

76 The new courtyard building block provides nine general purpose classrooms. The block has been converted from redundant farm buildings. Rooms are light, clean and comfortable. With this addition to the number of classrooms available, rooms dedicated to particular specialisms have been established. Wall displays in these rooms are regularly updated and provide useful background information. Approximately half the classrooms in use are older and these provide adequate space and facilities. There has been a policy of using demountable rooms and some of these have been gradually replaced as the courtyard has been developed. All classrooms are kept tidy and are generally well maintained. The room allocation and booking system works effectively.

77 Specialist accommodation in animal care is of good quality. Machinery workshops are clean, tidy and well managed and are suited to their purpose. Construction is appropriately housed in custom-built workshops with adjacent classrooms and a large barn for dry stone walling work. Storage is carried out in an orderly and well-run manner. The areas available are generally suitable in size and accessibility and care is taken to maximise security.

78 Student accommodation on site is based in hostels at Kingston Maurward house and at Stinsford Farm. These provide individual study bedrooms for approximately 55 students. Hostels were redecorated in the summer. Students can be self-catering if they wish. Students are satisfied with the facilities provided.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND ISSUES**

79 The strengths of the college are:

- high-quality teaching and learning
- the growing range of provision for full-time students
- the positive relationships with local employers and Dorset TEC
- the range of links with local schools and with the community
- an enthusiastic corporation board, aware of the issues facing the college
- systematic collection and analysis of relevant performance indicators
- the commitment shown by course tutors and wardens in the recruitment, guidance and support of students

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- the effective induction and tutor support processes
  - the provision of learning support
  - the attention given to ensuring students' punctuality and attendance
  - the quality assurance procedures
  - the high motivation and flexible deployment of the college's staff
  - the very high quality of accommodation and specialist equipment.

80 The college should address the following issues:

- the limited opportunities for study at foundation level and for students who wish to progress to higher education
- the lack of open-learning provision
- the monitoring and review of equal opportunities issues
- the review of the standing orders and procedures of the corporation board
- the absence of formal counselling and careers advisory services
- the lack of knowledge and monitoring of 16 to 18 year old students in local accommodation
- the inconsistencies in the implementation of quality assurance procedures
- the lack of clearly identifiable standards of service and a complaints procedure within the students' charter
- the upgrading of the formal professional qualifications of some teachers.

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## FIGURES

1	Percentage enrolments by age (as at November 1995)
2	Percentage enrolments by level of study (as at November 1995)
3	Enrolments by mode of attendance and curriculum area (as at November 1995)
4	Staff profile – staff expressed as full-time equivalents (as at November 1995)
5	Estimated income (for 12 months to July 1996)
6	Estimated expenditure (for 12 months to July 1996)

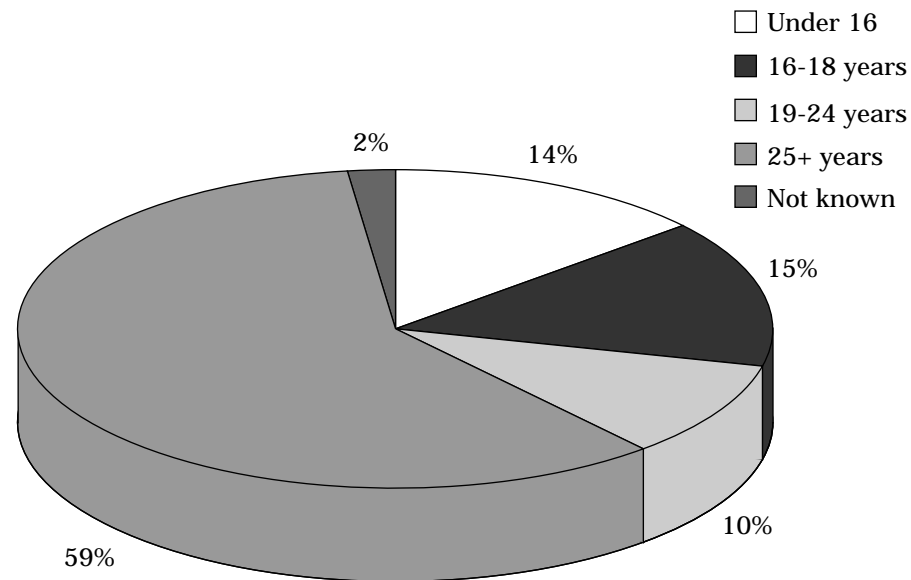
**Note:** the information contained in the figures was provided by the college to the inspection team.

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**Figure 1**

**Kingston Maurward College: percentage enrolments by age (as at November 1995)**

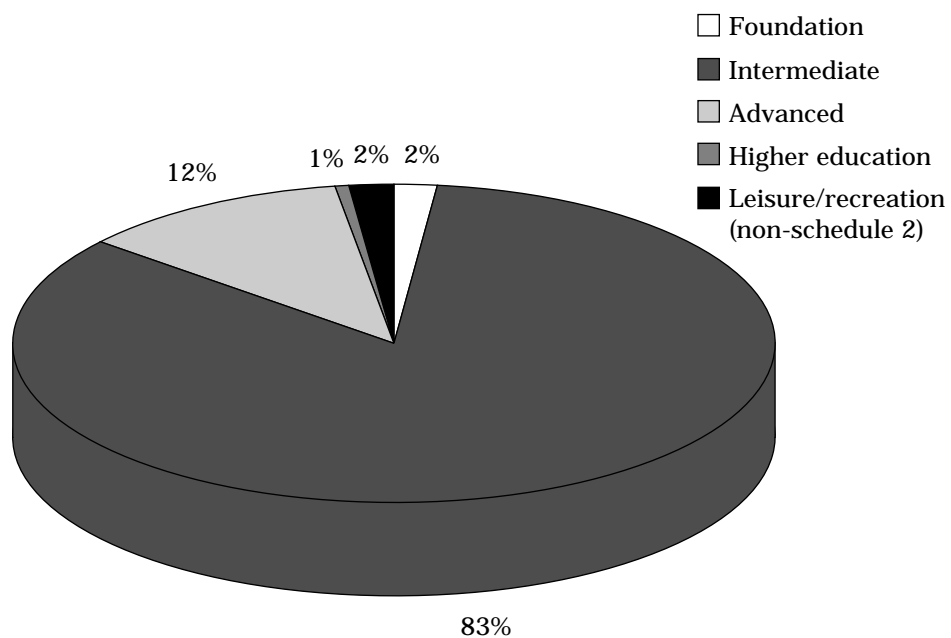


Enrolments: 1,373

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**Figure 2**

**Kingston Maurward College: percentage enrolments by level of study (as at November 1995)**

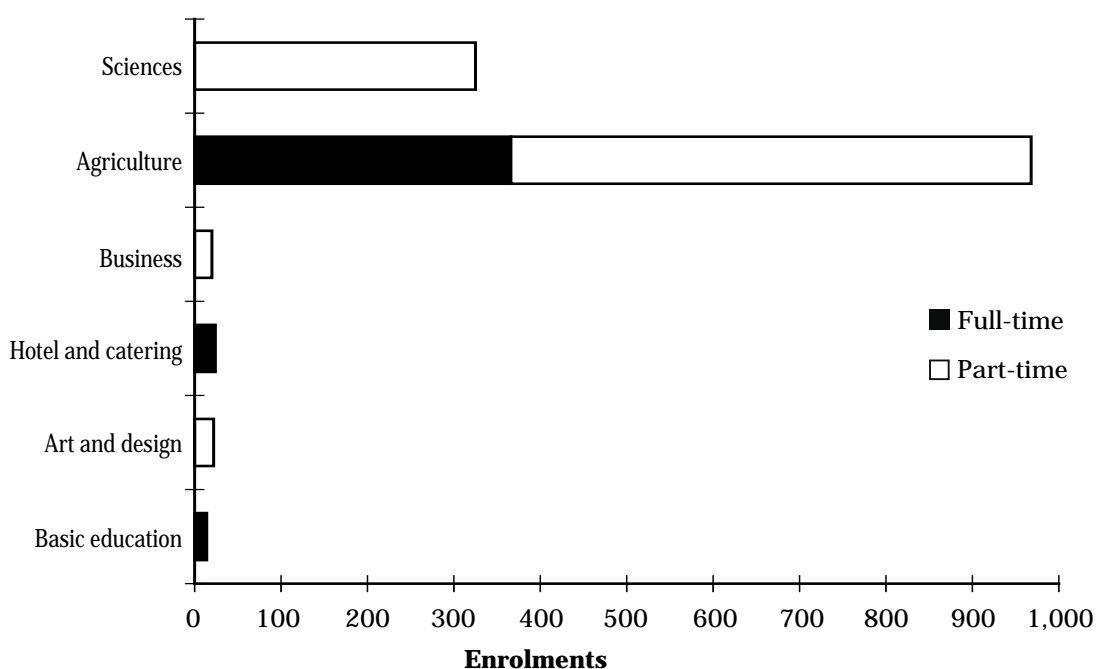


Enrolments: 1,373

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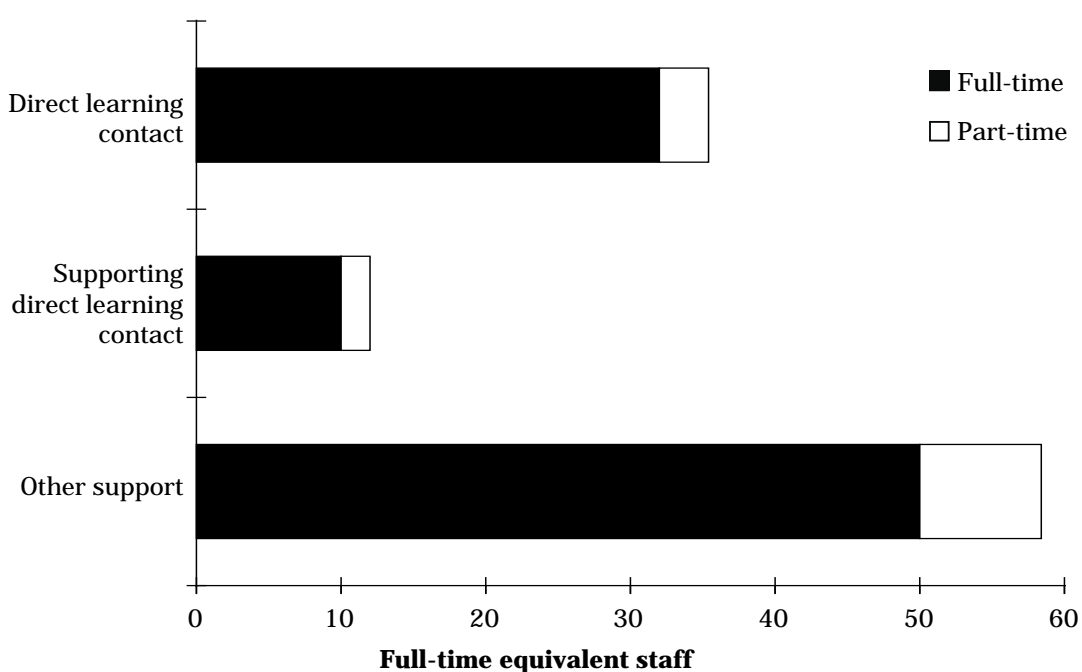
**Figure 3**

**Kingston Maurward College: enrolments by mode of attendance and curriculum area (as at November 1995)**



**Figure 4**

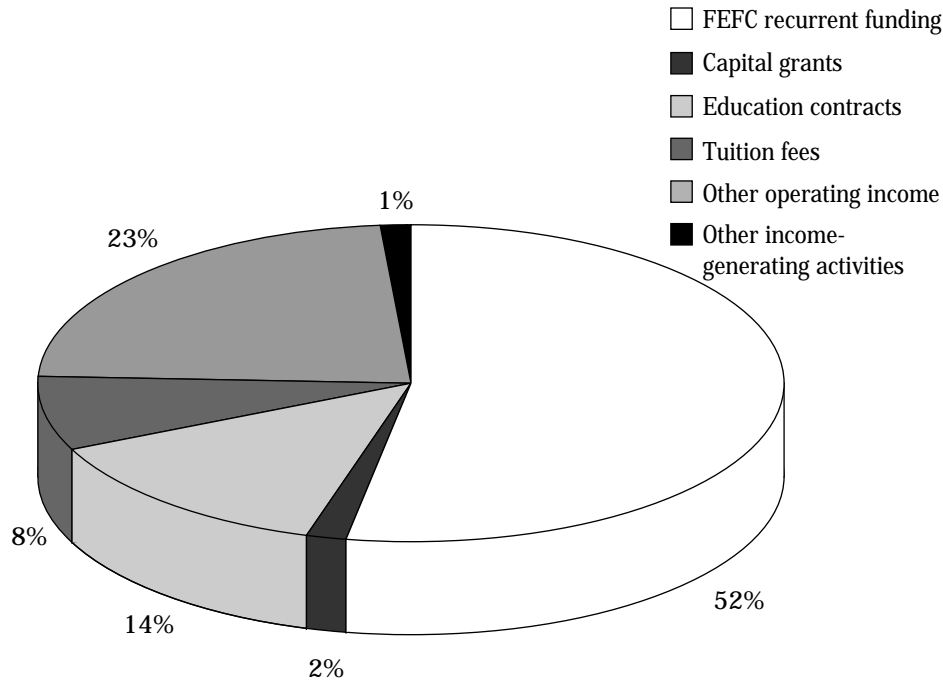
**Kingston Maurward College: staff profile – staff expressed as full-time equivalents (as at November 1995)**





**Figure 5**

**Kingston Maurward College: estimated income (for 12 months to July 1996)**



Estimated income: £3,641,000

**Note:** this chart excludes £6,000 other grant income.

**Figure 6**

**Kingston Maurward College: estimated expenditure (for 12 months to July 1996)**



Estimated expenditure: £3,572,000

