

**REPORT  
FROM THE  
INSPECTORATE**

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# **Wigston College of Further Education**

**July 1996**

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**THE  
FURTHER  
EDUCATION  
FUNDING  
COUNCIL**

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**THE FURTHER EDUCATION  
FUNDING COUNCIL**

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

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

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## **GRADE DESCRIPTORS**

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

*The descriptors for the grades are:*

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

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

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

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

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# FEFC INSPECTION REPORT 77/96

## WIGSTON COLLEGE OF FURTHER EDUCATION

### EAST MIDLANDS REGION

Inspected May 1995-March 1996

#### Summary

Wigston College of Further Education is located on the southern boundary of the city of Leicester. It offers vocational and non-vocational programmes for school leavers and an increasing number of adult students. Some high-quality training is undertaken for local employers. The college has a friendly atmosphere. Staff are supportive and caring. Good resources are available to support the development of students' knowledge and skills. Students play an important role in the evaluation of courses. Examination results are generally satisfactory. The college has a wide mission statement which it has started to address. Further development in the breadth and depth of its provision is needed and planned. The academic board has a clearly-defined role in the review and development of college policies but the faculties need to pay greater attention to the consistent implementation of these. The college should: improve the reliability and use of management information; make more thorough and consistent use of performance indicators; ensure that all students receive equally effective tutorial support; raise levels of attendance and retention rates on some of its courses; improve the quality of some of its accommodation; and systematically monitor its use of teaching accommodation.

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	3
Governance and management	3
Students' recruitment, guidance and support	3
Quality assurance	3
Resources: staffing	2
equipment/learning resources	2
accommodation	3

<b>Curriculum area</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Curriculum area</b>	<b>Grade</b>
Computing	2	Health and social care	3
Engineering	3	Humanities and teacher education	3
Administration	2	Provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities/adult basic education	3
Business and management	2		
Leisure and tourism	3		

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## **INTRODUCTION**

1 Wigston College of Further Education was inspected from May 1995 to March 1996. Inspectors spent 55 days inspecting aspects of the college, including guidance for prospective students, enrolment, and induction. They observed 117 teaching sessions, examined students' work, analysed examination results, and read a range of college documents. Meetings were held with governors, staff, students, employers and representatives from the local community, schools and Leicestershire Training and Enterprise Council (TEC).

## **THE COLLEGE AND ITS AIMS**

2 Wigston College of Further Education was established in 1970. The main site is in the borough of Oadby and Wigston on the southern boundary of the city of Leicester. The college has grown considerably in recent years, establishing annexes in Market Harborough and Wigston. Road and rail links are good. There are two general further education colleges and three sixth form colleges within eight miles of Wigston in addition to school sixth forms. The nearest centres for higher education are De Montfort University, Leicester University, Loughborough University and Nene College, Northampton.

3 The college recruits from Oadby, Wigston, Leicester, Market Harborough and villages in South East Leicestershire. The majority of students live within a 12-mile radius of the Wigston site. Management and professional programmes attract students from a wider geographical area. There are also overseas students from Spain, France, Belgium, Morocco, Hong Kong and Japan, who mainly follow courses in English as a foreign language. The number of adult students at the college is increasing. Forty-eight per cent of the full-time and 86 per cent of the part-time students are now over the age of 19. At the time of the inspection, there were 3,092 students. Enrolments by age, by level of study and by mode of attendance and curriculum area are shown in figures 1, 2 and 3, respectively.

4 In 1995, Leicestershire had an unemployment rate of 5.9 per cent compared with 8.0 per cent for the United Kingdom as a whole. Eleven per cent of the population of Leicestershire and 28 per cent of college students are from minority ethnic groups. Employment in Leicestershire is mainly in retailing and distribution; business and professional services; engineering; textiles; health and social work; and education. Small businesses, employing less than 25 employees, account for 87 per cent of all businesses in Leicestershire.

5 The college is organised into three faculties and 13 business support areas which include finance, learning resources, students services and the creche. All staff are organised into teams. Faculty teaching teams are led by section managers. There are 130 full-time equivalent staff. A staff profile, with staff expressed as full-time equivalents, is shown in figure 4.

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6 The college's mission is to 'provide sustainable vocational and community education through lifelong access to learning'. Values emphasised in the mission statement include quality, efficiency and effectiveness, equality, initiative, the relevance of service, learning opportunities for individual aspirations, respect for the worth of every person, responsiveness, and an approach to learning which focuses on the student. The college aims to achieve its mission by providing a wide range of programmes through various modes of attendance in locations throughout South East Leicestershire, by pursuing a regime of continuous and measurable quality improvement with a customer focus, and by providing a supportive and caring environment for students.

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

7 The college offers vocational and non-vocational programmes for school leavers, adults and employers. The curriculum areas include business studies, administration, caring and health, computing and information technology, engineering, leisure and tourism, and science. There are 24 full-time vocational courses. Sixteen subjects are offered for the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) and 12 at General Certificate of Education advanced level (GCE A level). Most full-time courses can be combined with the study of a modern foreign language. There are 68 part-time vocational and short courses. Some courses have been organised in modules and can be studied on either a full-time or a part-time basis. The college intends to extend the modular structure to all its courses as a means of widening students' choice and encouraging recruitment.

8 The college has a broad and ambitious mission statement. However, the restricted breadth of its provision and the narrow range of programmes in some curriculum areas means that it has some way to go in achieving its mission. Computing courses are offered at an appropriate range of entry levels, but the number of students who progress from basic information technology programmes to vocational programmes is low. There are few professional computing updating courses and links with employers are limited. Engineering programmes match the needs of individual students and companies but the range of programmes offered is narrow. The administration, business and management areas offer a comprehensive range of office and secretarial skills, and accounting, marketing, and management courses. However, there are fewer than 10 students on many of these business related courses. In health and social care, there is an increasing range of courses attracting a diversity of clients. Additional elements are available for those wishing to progress to higher education but the number of students who take these is low. Community links are developing well but employer and school links are underdeveloped. Provision in leisure and tourism consists solely of General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) programmes which recruit predominantly in the 16 to 19 year old age range. Programmes are narrowly focused on the travel industry and do not provide effectively for

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students' progression into the leisure industry. There has been no formal attempt to identify the market for these courses.

9 The range of humanities subjects is restricted. The popularity of some GCE A level subjects, such as English literature, is declining and there are low student numbers on some courses. There has been little analysis of alternatives. There is a good certificated core skills programme for GCE A level and GCSE students. However, it is not implemented effectively. Training programmes in modern languages meet the requirements of individuals and industry, but the number of students is relatively small. Teacher training and assessor/verifier courses include the further education teachers certificate and assessor/verifier awards at National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) levels 3 and 4. There is appropriate provision in English as a foreign language; courses offer students some opportunity for progression. English for students of other languages courses have been run in conjunction with local employers to improve the promotional prospects of minority ethnic employees and are a suitable extension to the range of courses being offered. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities follow a foundation programme of one or two years duration. The range of vocational options within the programme is narrow.

10 There are a number of programmes specifically for adults. They provide opportunities for students from groups not usually involved in further education. Links with agencies and community groups have helped to identify some of the adult basic education needs of local communities. 'Link into learning' provides a wide range of part-time adult basic education learning opportunities but the college has not met its recruitment targets for this provision. The courses are based on the main site in Wigston and at the Coventry road site in Market Harborough. Six outreach centres and a variety of other venues in local villages are also used. The village locations are used mainly for short courses, some of which are at an introductory level, designed to help students progress to other courses. There is specific provision for travellers at various times during the year. Students can progress to a GCSE course in English through a study programme which provides a mix of tutor support and distance learning. A number of projects operate in community centres in Leicester, such as the Eyres Monsell short-course programme to train creche workers. The 'stepping stones' programme offers vocational programmes for the unemployed and for those wishing to re-enter employment. It is available in Wigston and Market Harborough and comprises 15 vocational introductory courses. Students can start the programme at any time during the year. There are often waiting lists to start the most popular courses. The college is in partnership with two schools in Market Harborough to develop the range and levels of education and training provision for adults in the area. GNVQ vocational modules in science and leisure and tourism are provided for one school. An education and training analysis of the area is being undertaken by the college.



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11 Students on the access programme, which prepares students who do not possess traditional qualifications for entry to higher education, are normally from groups which have not usually been associated with further and higher education. However, the programme recruits few male students or students from minority ethnic backgrounds. The programme is provided over one or more years and can be studied during the day or evening. Daytime classes are timetabled to fit in with the needs of parents. There is the opportunity for students to gain exemption from aspects of the programme by having their previous learning and experience recognised. Few students have used this opportunity. The programme starts with a useful eight-week module called 'planning your future'. It helps students who are contemplating progression to higher education to build their confidence and to explore options.

12 There are regular meetings with the local education authority (LEA) and the new unitary authority to discuss the possibility of collaborative working and other relevant educational issues. The college participates in a challenging project designed to provide education and training for young people permanently excluded from school. There are links with De Montfort University through the higher education engineering provision, and with Leicester University through modern languages. The links with local schools in the Wigston area are limited. A narrow range of vocational courses allows school pupils to sample aspects of the college provision. The college provides six-week modern language modules for primary school pupils on school premises at the end of the normal school day.

13 A small amount of off-site collaborative provision is run with two community organisations, a school and a private provider. These help to support the college's mission of meeting community needs. The provision in caring at Spinney Hill, an area with a large minority ethnic population and high levels of unemployment, is highly effective in meeting the needs of participants. An access to higher education information technology course is run at a community centre in Highfields and evening provision in languages and information technology at a local high school. The franchise agreement with a private provider to offer scuba diving training has recruited few students.

14 Relationships with Leicestershire TEC are good. The college contributes to a number of committees and working groups. It responds positively to ideas and initiatives, and has received development funding every year, although some of the amounts have been small. Communication and liaison with employers who use the college for training are excellent. Customer care is of a high standard. The college responds promptly to requests for training. There is regular and valuable feedback on students' progress. Wigston Training, the recently-formed managing agency, is already improving existing links with employers. It has identified additional training needs for local employees and successfully provided the training. Nevertheless, the college provides relatively little training for employees. Few employers are involved in course development and, where

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there is involvement, it is with individual courses rather than the programme area. In some vocational programmes the staff have no contacts with employers which inform the development and delivery of provision. The college has worked successfully with two local training providers to supply the training they were unable to provide themselves. In the case of an engineering-based course, the college provided the management training. This was extremely successful.

15 As a part of its strategic objective to attract more overseas students the college has developed contacts in several countries. Its European policy is aimed at developing and extending existing links, including curriculum liaison, work-experience placements, and teacher and student exchanges. Students attending English as a foreign language courses have come from a range of European Union and non-European countries. Contributions to a 'training the trainers' project has led to work-experience placements for students in Tenerife. Work placements have also been arranged in Istanbul, the Algarve and Mulhouse. Teachers of English as a foreign language have visited the college and curriculum information about training has been exchanged.

16 The college has a clear marketing policy. There is a three-year marketing plan and an accompanying operational strategy. Market research has been used to identify the range of local provision, potential education and training needs, and potential competition from neighbouring institutions. Market intelligence is not always used in setting targets for student enrolment in the strategic plan. However, faculties are attempting to ensure that their development plans are linked effectively to the college's marketing plan. The college's publicity is effective. A detailed analysis is carried out to ensure that publicity reaches the appropriate customers and is cost effective. A database of the college's contacts with employers is being developed.

17 The college promotes equality of opportunity and clearly states this commitment in its literature. The equal opportunities policy is published in the students' handbook and is discussed during induction. The policy has been in place for some time and meets equal opportunities commission standards. Marketing and publicity activities are sensitive to equal opportunities issues. The post of equal opportunities co-ordinator had been vacant for some time before the recent appointment. This slowed progress in monitoring the balance of race and gender of students and staff, sharing ideas and practice and reviewing the implementation of policy.

#### **GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT**

18 There have been significant changes in the membership of the board since incorporation to achieve a more business focused group. Eight governors left the board between February and June 1994 and six new members have joined in the last year. The board has recently appointed

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its third chair in two years after increased business commitments made it impossible for the previous chair to continue in post. Only the principal and three other members have served on the board since incorporation. The membership of the board has been reduced, intentionally, to 11. Eight are business or independent members. The other governors are the principal and two co-optees who work for the local authority. Until very recently, there were two women on the board. One has since resigned, creating a vacancy. There are no members from minority ethnic groups. The board has an audit committee, a remuneration committee, and a working party to select new governors. The joint consultative committee has staff and governor representatives. Members of the board have formed working parties on risk analysis and performance indicators. They are generally knowledgeable about the college. Some have used their skills and knowledge to contribute to college reviews of modern languages and engineering.

19 The board has recently reviewed its own procedures. It decided to continue to meet monthly and to deal with financial matters in whole committee rather than to reconstitute its original finance committee. A declaration of interests is taken at each meeting and a code of conduct is being considered. Supporting papers are detailed and comprehensive, although members do not always receive them sufficiently in advance. The financial controller presents the management accounts and other financial information and these are discussed. The funding process is not clear to some members. Monthly meetings create a continuing pressure on college management to produce the necessary support papers and to respond to issues arising from board meetings. Communications between governors and staff, in particular senior staff, are not as effective as they might be. The board is aware that the joint consultative committee is not fulfilling its purpose and it is currently reviewing the situation. Training and development opportunities have been offered to governors and a review of training needs is taking place.

20 The strategic plan is based on the plans of the academic sections and business support functions and is submitted to wide consultation. Efforts to create a more effective strategic plan involve sharpening the planning process and placing an increased emphasis on the financial and staffing implications of change.

21 The academic advisory board is chaired by the principal. Membership comprises the three faculty managers, three staff representatives from each faculty and the learning programmes research and development manager. The board has a clearly identified role in the review and development of policy. The board has four subcommittees: academic standards, academic planning, learning support, and advice and guidance. A review of all college policies is taking place. The intention is that policies will be updated annually. A range of policies have been produced or reviewed within the last year. Staff knowledge of them varies.

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Although some individuals have contributed to the formulation of policies, staff, generally, do not feel they have been part of the process. There is a clear allocation of responsibilities for implementing and monitoring policies. However, knowledge of the health and safety policy is poor. Some staff do not know who are the health and safety representatives in their own areas. The college has recently approved a work experience policy. Current procedures for work placements have yet to be adjusted to take account of this.

22 The college management group comprises the principal, the financial controller, the personnel and administration manager, the learning programmes research and development manager, the commercial director and the three faculty managers. Most of these appointments have been made within the last two years. The appointment of a commercial director, to take up post on 1 April 1996 will complete the reorganisation of the management group. The college is completing its second restructuring since 1991. Members of the college management group are adopting an open style of management. The college management group meets weekly following a prior meeting of the senior academic managers. The groups are working effectively at this stage in their development although strategic and operational roles have yet to be clearly defined. The principal meets the senior managers individually each week to review progress and to set targets.

23 Most faculty and section managers are new in their posts. Faculty managers are responsible for ensuring that targets for income and costs are achieved. They also undertake some teaching. The section managers report to the faculty manager and have responsibility for courses and staff within their curriculum area. Section managers receive remission from their teaching duties of between 468 and 216 hours a year, although the rationale for this variation is not clear. There are clear job descriptions for all posts. However, not all staff understand the roles of senior managers. The management structure is still in its infancy and the performance of faculties varies. In some cases, there is a lack of clear direction; in others, there is a failure to implement college policies. Co-ordinators are responsible for college-wide developments such as GNVQ and information technology. The co-ordination of GNVQ is at an early stage. Roles and responsibilities of the staff who manage the specialist programmes for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the staff who manage cross-college co-ordination of learning support are confused.

24 Lines of communication across the college are clear. There is a college news sheet, 'Chequerboard', and newsletters for information technology, GNVQs and the learning resource centre. Information relating to personnel policies is not readily accessible to all staff and there is no staff handbook. There are regular formal meetings of staff, covering a variety of issues and functions, and occasional meetings of all staff to discuss specific topics.

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Friday afternoon is a designated common time for meetings and development activities.

25 The college has set itself growth targets for full-time students funded by the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) averaging 8.75 per cent for the period 1995 to 1998. Growth in the number of part-time students is planned to average 11.5 per cent over the same period. The college achieved its target of 7.3 per cent overall growth in 1994-95 and is close to its target in the current year. However, the recruitment of full-time students has fallen below the target for 1995-96. Budgets are allocated annually to faculties and other cost centres and the procedures involved are understood by budget holders. Performance by cost centres is monitored. Variations from planned targets are identified and explanations required. There is now a tight control over part-time staffing expenditure following an overspend in the previous year. The college has an average level of funding for 1995-96 of £17.29 per unit. The median for general further education colleges is £17.84; for all sector colleges it is £18.56. The college's income and expenditure for 12 months to July 1995 are shown in figures 5 and 6. The college has taken part in a best practice exercise and is using the results to improve its performance. Indicators of performance in attendance, retention and levels of student satisfaction during 1995-96 have been set for each course. Responses to these indicators are expected to be recorded, using a simple form.

26 Management information systems are under the direction of the financial controller, supported by a management information systems manager. Financial information is provided on a regular basis and is generally reliable. Other routine reports are starting to emerge and a working group has been established to identify the needs of managers. There is some scepticism amongst staff about the accuracy of centralised information on students. Centrally-provided management information is not widely used at section level.

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

27 A good start has been made on a college-wide approach to students' recruitment, guidance, enrolment and induction. There is a policy dealing with pre-entry and admissions and a requirement that this is reviewed annually. A student guidance unit was set up at the start of this academic year. Part of its function is to co-ordinate admissions. A wide range of leaflets, prospectuses and booklets are produced aimed at different audiences. A comprehensive reference file, containing course details, is updated termly. Students are offered an initial interview by a member of the student guidance staff and welfare advice is also available. There are no private rooms specifically allocated for guidance interviews. Students are provided with copies of the student guide and the charter at their interviews. There is an interviewers' guide and a student information sheet which interviewers are required to go through with prospective students. Students are helped to formulate a career action plan. There is

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a friendly and caring approach to interviews but there is a lack of consistency in the way they are conducted. Some students are interviewed several times and the same information is sought. Many interviewers respond well to students' questions but some do not attempt to explore the students' suitability for and understanding of the level of course for which they are enrolling. Some interviews lack a planned framework and a clear record of essential details. Following their interviews, the prospective students are taken on a tour of the college.

28 Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive good initial guidance. Those applying for the preparation programme are referred directly by schools and supported by the careers service. There is no recognised admissions procedure for students entering the Wigston Day Centre programme. Support is limited to the personal care provided by care assistants. The recruitment processes for 'link into learning' courses are well established and effective. The development of individual learning programmes is a central feature. Staff collaborate effectively to help individuals move on to other college programmes.

29 The enrolment process is being improved. Enrolment took place in the learning resource centre which provided a welcoming atmosphere. The enrolment pack contained a helpful description of the process and the staff. Students enrolling late had to wait and queues occurred in the reception and student guidance areas. Three out of four of the college's quality standards for student services were not achieved. A review of the admissions procedures was undertaken in November 1995 and actions required to improve them were identified. Recruitment and guidance procedures for courses based in centres outside the college, other than 'link into learning' courses, were not always of the same standard as those operating on the main site.

30 The college has a policy for recognising the prior learning and experience of students and a framework for its implementation. The possibility of accreditation is discussed at guidance interviews where appropriate. In administration, individual elements/units of programmes can be accredited and in administration, in accounting and in access, individual programmes are constructed which take account of prior experience. Other than this, however, little use is made of the opportunity for accrediting students' prior achievements.

31 A clear and comprehensive tutors' guide provides a checklist of what should be covered at full-time students' induction. Student handbooks containing assignment schedules and course specific information are available for some, but not all, courses. There is considerable variation in the quality and value of induction sessions. GCSE and GCE A level sessions are especially weak. Staff do not always have sufficient or sufficiently reliable information from managers to be able to confirm students' options and arrange their timetables effectively. Induction to vocational courses places an emphasis on developing students' confidence and team building.

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It is usually successful. Part-time students receive a general introduction to the college.

32 Most personal tutors have a caring and supportive approach. However, students' experience of tutorial support is inconsistent. Full-time students are allocated to a personal tutor who is responsible for their induction programme and subsequently for their tutorial support. Part-time students are allocated a named person as a contact, if required. Tutorials are intended to provide support to students in the successful completion of vocational and academic programmes. They are organised much more effectively in some programme areas than others. Students experience individual and group tutorials. In individual tutorials, tutors check on students' progress, monitor their plans of action and give guidance on learning methods. Personal tutors are expected to access the central database to monitor students' attendance. There is no requirement for subject teachers to provide this information to tutors. Faculty managers and section managers do not monitor attendance in a systematic way. Personal tutors offer support to individual students who are experiencing difficulties with their learning programmes or have personal problems. The balance between group and individual tutorials varies considerably from course to course and from group to group. A tutorial pack has been devised and has recently been distributed to tutors in an attempt to improve consistency. It contains a new tutorial policy, a description of the roles and responsibilities of tutors, and a form for recording the tutorial activities undertaken. Tutors are to be required to cover certain mandatory elements and this will be checked by faculty managers. Some review of the tutorial system takes place at course team meetings but there is no formal procedure to ensure that this central aspect of support for students is monitored and evaluated consistently.

33 Students receive good quality learning support. The provision was awarded the Basic Skills Agency quality mark in March 1995. During induction, all full-time students are tested to see whether they need extra support in developing their literacy and numeracy skills. Those who do are interviewed and an individual learning plan is negotiated. Support is provided in the learning support centre. It is available for 22 hours a week and individual students attend for up to four hours. Students who need support are encouraged to attend the centre but this is voluntary. Overall, levels of attendance are reasonable. In the autumn of 1995, 110 students were identified as requiring support. Eighty-two were still attending the centre in March. By March 1996, a further 109 students had either asked for support or had been referred to the centre by tutors. The resources in the centre are well planned and organised so as to be easily accessible for students. Most resources can be borrowed. Where four or more students from a course require additional learning support, arrangements can be made for learning support staff to join with vocational teachers to provide support in classrooms. This works well. It has enabled additional certification to be offered to some groups. There are good procedures for

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identifying students with dyslexia. Some of these students have not had their difficulties recognised previously.

34 A student counselling service is provided. The college has a counselling policy and the availability and remit of the service is outlined in the students' handbook. The service is also introduced at induction. There are links with external agencies such as the community drugs team, family planning, housing associations and the Asian family and marriage counselling service. The counsellor is a member of the teaching staff and has approximately one-third of her time allocated for counselling. The same person is also responsible for processing the applications for financial assistance from college access funds. The counsellor does not have appropriate professional support. There is no facility for students to book an appointment other than by personally visiting the counsellor. Students can attend without an appointment but this endangers the confidentiality of the service if a counselling session is already taking place. The counselling room lacks privacy and there is no comfortable seating. The counsellor submits a brief annual report to the principal but there is no comprehensive analysis of the use of the service.

35 The college has good facilities for daycare provision for children from six months to five years in its 20-place day nursery. The cost for students' children is subsidised and the occupancy rate is good.

36 Efforts are being made to regenerate the student union and to increase its activity within the college. The first edition of a newsletter has been published. Student union membership has increased significantly and union members are working to increase the range of facilities available. A member of the student guidance staff is designated as a student union liaison officer. The union submits a written report to the governing body but there is no formal mechanism for the union to meet with senior managers or governors. A Christian union meets weekly for informal discussions and there are facilities for Muslim prayer.

37 A careers education and guidance policy exists in draft. Careers education and guidance is provided by college guidance staff and by careers advisers from the Leicestershire careers service. One adviser works exclusively with students who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Tutors are able to book group sessions for careers advice but few do so. Many of the sessions are poorly attended. Individual careers interviews are provided. They take place in the language centre, away from the careers library and other support materials. Students applying for entry to higher education receive good support. There is no centralised record of careers service activity and no system for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the service.

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

38 Of the 117 sessions inspected, 60 per cent had strengths which outweighed the weaknesses. Weaknesses outweighed strengths in 12 per



cent of classes. The inspection grades awarded are shown in the following table.

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

<b>Programmes</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>Totals</b>
GCE AS/A level		0	3	2	1	1	7
GCSE		0	3	4	2	0	9
GNVQ		0	7	5	0	0	12
NVQ		3	6	1	0	0	10
Basic education		5	5	1	0	0	11
Access to higher education		5	3	3	1	0	12
Other vocational		3	15	7	5	1	31
Other		3	9	10	1	2	25
<b>Total</b>		<b>19</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>117</b>

39 Average attendance in the classes observed was 69.5 per cent. It varied from 56 per cent in English to 93 per cent for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Curriculum areas with attendance rates below 70 per cent included English, engineering, teacher education, access and adult basic education.

40 Computing sessions are well structured and have clear objectives. Students are well supported during practical sessions and are working to an appropriate standard. Assignments emphasise the importance of good design. Core skills are developed as integral elements of the coursework.

41 Engineering programmes are well designed. In some of the better sessions, students are provided with a range of appropriate learning experiences and are interested and responsive. In some of the weaker sessions, teachers fail to motivate the students, methods of working are inappropriate or students spend too much of their time copying notes. Some good learning materials are used to develop students' drawing skills. Assessments are set at an appropriate standard. Cover sheets for marked assessments record the teacher's comments and include the signatures of the student and the internal verifier. On NVQ courses, there are some interesting and effective tests for assessing students' underpinning knowledge.

42 There are opportunities for administration students to progress according to their individual needs with appropriate teacher support. NVQ level 2 business administration sessions, and skills development sessions, such as wordprocessing, are well structured. Students work well using suitable course materials. Work experience and work-related practices are used to inform teaching and learning, and contribute to students' assessment. Part-time NVQ students are given individual tuition

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and teachers draw effectively on their previous experience. The pace of work in some of the more theoretical sessions is too slow and teachers miss opportunities to check students' understanding or to tell them what progress they are making. Business and management courses are well planned. Students are provided with schemes of work which include learning objectives. They work in a pleasant environment and experience an appropriate range of methods of working. Group work and practical exercises based on company scenarios are used well.

43 In the better leisure and tourism sessions, good planning and classroom management ensure that students learn effectively. Teachers make clear links with students' previous learning. In most classes, however, the purpose of the session is rarely explained to students. No records are kept of individual students' progress in workshops and tutorials. The lack of a realistic work environment has an adverse effect on students' learning. Attempts are being made to develop a travel desk.

44 Some health and community care lessons are well organised and effective; teachers and students enjoy a good working relationship, students are encouraged to learn from each other, and teachers value and make good use of students' own knowledge and experience. In some of the less successful sessions, teachers pay inadequate attention to students' varying abilities when addressing the class in formal presentations or assigning tasks. Links between theory and practice are not always sufficiently clear to students.

45 In English, schemes of work are generally detailed and most teachers work to lesson plans. The aims of the lesson are generally clear. Students experience appropriate methods of working but the quality of some handout material is poor. Students' work is marked diligently and effectively. The core studies programme for GCE A level students is poorly taught. In GCSE courses, many sessions which are timetabled for core studies work are used to complete subject work. Work schemes for social science courses are generally well planned. However, where lesson plans exist, they are rarely comprehensive and generally fail to provide a clear structure for activities. In many sessions, the teaching lacks sparkle. Students often spend too much time on a single activity and opportunities are missed to develop their oral skills. Handouts are of good quality and there are some well-produced and useful workbooks. In a few instances, group work is neither well prepared nor well organised. Some of the English and social science classes are small and this means that students miss out on the broad discussions and other forms of interaction which are possible in larger teaching groups.

46 Some of the lessons on the courses designed to prepare students for entry to higher education are well planned and well organised. There are also some sessions which are inadequately prepared and poorly structured. Workshop sessions generally provide effective support for individual students. Study skills guidelines are clear and helpful. Methods of

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assessment are appropriate, the criteria for assessments are explicit and students' work is marked with care. In education studies, the initial teacher training programme is not well organised. The quality of work varies and some of the teaching is poor. Teachers have varying expectations of the students; the standards applied are not consistent. The access to teaching course and the teachers' certificate in administrative skills provide good learning experiences. Students of English as a foreign language, experience a suitable range of methods of working. There are good opportunities for them to practise the spoken language. Authentic audio and visual resources are used for listening practice. In a few classes, students are not encouraged to read aloud when the opportunity arises. In some of the sessions involving students with lower than average linguistic ability, too many activities are undertaken at the expense of doing fewer tasks well. Students on this course receive additional support through the learning support workshop. The feedback to the trainee teachers on the certificate of teaching English as a foreign language is supportive and constructive. Time is allowed for peer evaluation and critical self-reflection.

47 Adult basic education teachers know individual students and understand their learning needs. Activities are well managed. In most cases, there are appropriate resources to support the teaching of basic skills. Well-developed individual learning programmes allow students to receive recognition for their previous achievements. Lessons are well prepared. However, teachers do not always allow enough opportunity for group interaction and the development of interpersonal skills. Lessons for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are poorly planned. Where lesson plans exist, they are imprecise and have no clear links with schemes of work. Individual students' learning objectives are not identified. Many lessons lack a purposeful working atmosphere and students are not sufficiently stimulated or challenged. Teachers do not take enough account of the differing learning needs of students. There is little recording of individual students' achievement and progress.

#### **STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENTS**

48 Seventy-eight per cent of the 95 students in their final year of study on the vocational courses included in the Department for Education and Employment's 1995 performance tables were successful. This places the college among the middle third of colleges in the further education sector on this performance measure. Results were better in 1994 when 85 students obtained a 95 per cent pass rate which placed the college in the top third of colleges in the sector.

49 The 27 students aged 16 to 18 (less than 1 per cent of all students) entered for GCE AS/A level examinations in 1994-95 scored, on average, 2.6 points per entry (where A=10, E=2). This places the college among the bottom third of colleges in the further education sector on this performance measure, based on the data in the 1995 performance tables published by

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the Department for Education and Employment. This is an improvement on the 1994 score when 17 students scored, on average, 0.8 points per entry.

50 Most computing students enjoy their studies and are keen to achieve. They are able to talk knowledgeably about their course. Assignments and other written work are of an appropriate standard. Students are adept at using wordprocessing software but less so when working with accounting software. In engineering, the overall pass rates for full-time non-employed students are poor. In 1994-95, eight students were enrolled on the first year of the Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) national diploma; five completed the year and only one was successful. In 1993-94, nine students were enrolled on the BTEC first diploma; four were entered for the examinations and two passed. Pass rates on national certificate programmes are close to national averages. Students on NVQ level 2 programmes are usually successful in obtaining an NVQ qualification.

51 Administration students are developing appropriate levels of skill in shorthand, text processing and wordprocessing. The ability to work with others is developed through a relevant work-experience programme for full-time students. Students write clearly about the applications of knowledge in their NVQ portfolios. Assessed work is of a satisfactory standard. Full-time students on administration courses achieve good results in external examinations in the first year of their course. They also gain single-subject skill awards. Full-time students in their second year are less successful. None achieved an NVQ level 3 award in 1994-95, compared with a pass rate of 42 per cent in 1993-94. As a result, the college no longer expects students to aim for this qualification. Almost 70 per cent of the full-time adult students gained the higher diploma in administrative procedures in 1994-95. On many courses, the achievements of business and management students are in line with national averages. The certificate in personnel practice evening course had a 90 per cent pass rate in 1993-94 and a 100 per cent pass rate in 1994-95. Results in the Association of Accounting Technicians examinations are poor; no student obtained a complete certificate at NVQ level 4 in 1995, although there were high pass rates for individual units. Professional courses have pass rates in final examinations which vary from 30 per cent to 70 per cent.

52 On leisure and tourism courses, students' portfolios of work are poorly organised and presented. Students are not planning or recording their work effectively. Those who complete their courses are generally successful. Pass rates vary from 76 per cent to 100 per cent. Pass rates, measured against the number of students enrolled are disappointing, varying from 42 per cent to 76 per cent. In health and community care, part-time students produce some assignments of high quality and examination pass rates are generally satisfactory. Levels of achievement

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on nursery nursing courses have declined. Many students take great care with the presentation of their work but some pay less attention to the quality of the analysis and evaluation within their assignments. The standard of numeracy displayed by full-time students is low. Literacy skills are of a higher standard but more advanced skills, such as developing sustained argument or correctly quoting sources, are underdeveloped, particularly in the case of advanced GNVQ students. Students work well in groups. They display good communication skills but listening skills are less well developed. Students are gaining in confidence and in their sensitivity to health and community issues. Some advanced GNVQ students make good use of information technology.

53 English students produce competent written work. Examination results in GCE A level English literature have improved from a pass rate of 33 per cent in 1993-94 to 44 per cent in 1994-95. However, this is still well below the 80 per cent average for students of all ages in further education colleges other than sixth form colleges. In 1994-95, only 12 per cent of the full-time GCSE English students, aged 16 to 18, achieved grades A to C compared with an average of 44 per cent in further education colleges other than sixth form colleges. In social sciences, the most recent examination results reflect a marked improvement in pass rates and in the number of higher grade passes achieved at GCE A level.

54 In 1994-95, 33 out of the 52 access course students progressed successfully to higher education. Students are enthusiastic and work hard. They develop appropriate higher order skills although some of their work contains too much description and not enough analysis and judgement based on evidence. Students are generally articulate and confident. Education studies students teach well-planned demonstration lessons in a lively, enthusiastic way. They collaborate effectively to achieve their goals. Their portfolios of work contain examples of achievement above the level required for the further education teacher's course. Students following the teacher's certificate in administrative skills are progressing well on the pilot scheme. Students on the English as a foreign language course achieve a high level of spoken and written English even though some of them are unable, for personal reasons, to take external examinations. There is a high pass rate for students who take external examinations at the appropriate levels. On occasion, achievement is adversely affected where students enter for higher level examinations than those recommended by their tutor.

55 Portfolios of work completed by students attending adult basic education courses show that they make progress in acquiring basic skills. Students become increasingly confident about managing their own learning. The number of students who receive certification for their basic skills achievements has increased progressively during the last few years. Some students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities follow externally validated NVQ level 1 programmes. In one numeracy class, students were

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actively involved in recording their own achievements and setting new learning targets. However, this practice is not widespread. Generally, students do not take any personal responsibility for measuring their progress. In the majority of classes inspected students showed little desire to learn. There is no concept of progression for students on the Wigston day centre programme.

56 Data on the destinations of students aged 16 to 18 show that 53 per cent of the students on intermediate and level 2 courses progressed to further education courses in 1994-95. Twenty-three per cent of students on the NVQ level 2 course obtained employment. Thirty-six per cent of the GCE A level students and 64 per cent of the BTEC national students went on to higher education courses. For students aged 19 and over, information on destinations is more difficult to obtain, especially at the intermediate level. Forty per cent of the students aged 19 and over taking two or more GCE A levels, and 34 per cent of those taking BTEC nationals, went on to higher education. A survey of 470 full-time students in 1994-95 showed that 82 per cent entered employment or continued in education.

57 The retention rate for FEFC-funded students for 1994-95, based on enrolments on 1 November 1994 compared with enrolments on 1 May 1995, was 90 per cent. Retention rates vary widely across the college. Some professional courses in business and management have 100 per cent retention rates. On other courses, including access to higher education courses, retention rates are improving. There are many courses which have retention rates of less than 80 per cent and/or falling retention rates. Accurate statistics are difficult to obtain in some instances.

#### **QUALITY ASSURANCE**

58 The college charter was produced in 1994. The college charter has been adapted to make it easy to understand for 'link into learning' students. A student guide containing the charter is distributed to all students during induction. The guide is a handy, pocket-sized booklet which contains other useful general information on student appeals and disciplinary procedures. Although staff do not automatically receive a copy of the charter, there is widespread awareness of the commitments it contains. The charter contains some measurable standards relating to admissions and the reporting of students' progress. An evaluation of performance against these standards showed that the service exceeded the published standards in one area. Consequently, these standards have been reviewed and raised for the coming year.

59 Quality assurance procedures have recently been revised to meet ISO 9002 standards. The academic standards subcommittee of the academic advisory board has devised a well-structured quality assurance system for academic work, but not all aspects of the system are fully implemented across the college. The system includes a policy statement and four sets of procedures relating to the validation of new courses, the monitoring,

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review and evaluation of existing courses, the periodic review of programmes and the college self-assessment report. A member of the college management group has responsibility for quality.

60 The validation procedure for new courses is a recent addition to the quality assurance system. A course has to go through the validation procedure before it is included in the college programme. The procedure is thorough and there are clearly-defined information requirements. Judgements are made on the suitability of the course as it relates to market information, and resource requirements including the availability of staff and their development needs. To date, four new courses have been validated.

61 The monitoring, review and evaluation of courses involves the compilation of programme folders, boards of study meetings, annual review, and internal verification and external verification reports. The quality assurance document describes the procedures to be adopted at the various stages of the monitoring and review process. Programme folders contain a range of information about the operation of a course but they are of variable quality. The better folders are detailed and comply with requirements. Some faculty managers are not sufficiently involved in monitoring the compilation of the folders to ensure that they are consistently of an acceptable quality.

62 Boards of study oversee the operation of courses. The boards meet twice a year for all full-time and some part-time courses. The meetings give students and employers the opportunity to raise issues about any aspect of the course. To improve their effectiveness, there are standard agendas and formal minutes. Not all programme files contain records of these meetings or have information to show that meetings have taken place. Students regularly attend the meetings and employers are also present on occasions. Additional support is provided to help student representatives to prepare for the meetings. Students report that issues raised at boards of study are generally either explained or resolved and they feel confident that the points they raise are given serious consideration. The annual course review requires an analysis of qualitative data, the collection of quantitative data on aspects such as enrolment and retention, and the formulation of a plan of action for the next year. Section managers are responsible for collecting the information and are expected to use indicators to monitor performance. There is some confusion amongst section and faculty managers about what action to take if performance targets on retention, achievement, attendance and progression are not met. The 1994-95 annual course reviews were not completed by all course teams. Those that were produced were of variable quality. The amount of critical evaluation in many of the reports was limited. Data were not systematically analysed in the reports of some teams. Many plans of action lacked clear direction. The quality manager is working with section and faculty managers to address this issue.

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63 Existing programmes are subject to an in-depth review on a four-year cycle. The review provides an opportunity for managers and course team members to critically appraise the performance of a course against a range of indicators. These include students' achievements, progression rates and areas of good practice. The process includes observation of students' learning experiences. Course teams who have experienced the in-depth review are supportive of the process.

64 The self-assessment report is an integral part of the quality assurance system. The current report is written to the headings of the Council Circular 93/28, *Assessing Achievement*. The information is clearly presented and there is some reference to supporting documentation. It is generally descriptive rather than analytical and some weaknesses are treated superficially. The section on resources does not make cross-reference to the strategic plan.

65 In addition to the contributions which students make to boards of study, student opinion is surveyed by means of twice-yearly questionnaires. A summary of the responses to these questionnaires is presented to the college management group, together with some analysis. Comments made by every individual are reported and this form of presentation leads to some difficulty in establishing the overall view of students on some college and course related issues. Information is fed back to course teams for appropriate action.

66 Service standards are in place for some, but not all, support functions. The learning resources centre, the examinations service, and the learning support service are preparing to meet the procedures required by ISO 9002. The examinations officer and the creche manager have surveyed the opinions of their client groups to help them evaluate their performance. This information has been used to improve some aspects of provision.

67 The college has entered into franchise agreements with a small number of providers. A common franchise agreement has not been used and there is a lack of consistency in the stated quality assurance requirements. None of the franchise agreements were signed until several months after the start of the respective courses. This is a new area of work for the college and it has yet to be brought under the umbrella of its quality assurance system.

68 There is no formal induction programme for staff. Although each job description contains a reference to individual responsibility for complying with the quality control standards laid down by the college, information on these standards is not communicated to new staff. In 1995-96, the college allocated 1.4 per cent of its budget to staff development. The budget is in two parts: 40 per cent is controlled by the principal and the remaining 60 per cent is controlled by the personnel manager. The principal's portion is allocated primarily to the development needs of the college management group. It is also used to institute major developments. The remainder covers all staff outside the college management group. The expenditure is



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allocated to personal development and to the maintenance and development of college programmes and systems.

69 The staff-development section of the strategic plan does not draw together the various development requirements identified in other sections of the plan. Staff development is not formally linked to strategic objectives. Generally, staff are required to identify a link between the development activity they wish to follow and either one of the college's strategic objectives or a personal development need. The staff-development officer keeps a record of staff-development events attended by individuals but there is no systematic updating of personnel records. The staff-development programme is reviewed regularly to check progress against objectives. The cost of developing each objective is not identified and the review process does not involve an assessment of the value the college is gaining from its expenditure on staff development. There is no appraisal system at present. Individual performance targets do not relate to the strategic plan. The college is committed to achieving the Investors in People award and has a development plan for this.

## **RESOURCES**

### **Staffing**

70 There are 56 full-time and 66 (18.7 full-time equivalent) part-time teaching staff. Part-time teaching staff represent 25 per cent of the teaching staff in terms of full-time equivalent numbers. Teachers are suitably qualified. Fifty-nine per cent of all teaching staff have a degree or professional qualification and 80 per cent a teaching qualification. In some curriculum areas, the industrial experience of a number of staff is dated. However, some teachers have regular contact with local industry and part-time teachers bring with them good, recent experience of industry. There are 39 full-time and 34 (16.4 full-time equivalent) part-time support staff. Forty per cent of those who support learning have a qualification at advanced level or above.

71 The college has no staffing strategy or audit of staff skills. There are common conditions of service for academic and administrative support staff. The conditions of service of part-time staff are being reviewed because of the recent European ruling on the employment of part-time staff. College accounts show that expenditure on staff accounts for 72.9 per cent of income. Personnel records are being computerised and the payroll will be run in-house from April 96.

### **Equipment/learning resources**

72 The college's equipment revenue budget is related to the needs identified for the year. Faculties formulate bids for capital funds and these have to be consistent with college and faculty plans. Bids are considered by the college management group before being forwarded to the governing body for approval. The majority of recent capital has been spent on

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information technology equipment. A three-year equipment replacement cycle is in place for information technology equipment.

73 Generally, specialist equipment is suitable for its purpose. Computing equipment for the administration course and business and management courses is modern and has industry standard software. Some of the typewriters used by students are out-dated machines. In engineering, there has been some recent investment in welding equipment; much of the remaining equipment is suitable for teaching basic skills but is dated. English as a foreign language has a good supply of text books at different levels and a wide selection of audio tapes for listening practice. Computer hardware and software used with students who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is inadequate.

74 The main site has several computer suites. A number of computers have been purchased recently and there are now approximately 200 computers available for students. The majority of computers are modern machines fitted with sufficient memory to run industry standard software. Industry standard software for wordprocessing, spreadsheets and databases is being introduced for both students and staff. The Hawthorne building has four specialist computing suites, including one which provides access for students at times of their own choosing. The learning resource centre also has a computing area. In the main building, there are two computer suites for business and secretarial students. One of these suites is also available to students whenever it suits them. Access to these facilities has been restricted in the past. The availability of machines is now much improved although the facilities are not well publicised.

75 Computers are used by academic managers for management information and by business support staff for administrative and secretarial purposes. Managers have a computer each and teaching staff have access to four computers which are solely for their use. All of the computers are networked so that data and software can be shared. The St Mary's site has a suite of modern computers and software. In the case of minor problems this is serviced through a modem link; for more serious problems a technician visits the site. The Coventry Road site has only one modern computer for use by administrative staff and students, although there are a number of older portable wordprocessors and laptop computers. The college's information technology committee advises on the hardware and software requirements of the college and collates bids for capital purchases of information technology equipment.

76 The learning resources centre, in the Hawthorne building, houses the library, a careers information area, a computer suite and a multi-media area. The facility is new and provides a bright, modern learning environment. Within the library there is an enclosed quiet work area and two rooms which can be booked by students for group work on projects. There are also work spaces in the main body of the library where students can study together. The bookstock is reviewed regularly. There are approximately 15,000 volumes and 200 journals. Compact disk read-

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only memory (CD-ROM) databases provide access to various sources of information, including an encyclopedia, a newspaper and a scientific magazine. The multi-media area includes video, digital editing, photo-CD, inter-active CD and off-air recording systems. Video players are provided permanently on each floor of the main building and in other secure locations around the site. The majority of teaching areas have an overhead projector and screen. In the last few years there has been a considerable financial investment in books, other materials and equipment for the learning resource centre.

77 The learning support centre, in the Hawthorne building, has a wide range of learning resources to support the teaching of basic numeracy, literacy, and information technology skills, including six modern computers with appropriate software. The base room is suitably furnished and provides a pleasant learning environment. It is staffed by learning support staff for approximately 22 hours a week and by 'link into learning' staff for a further nine hours.

### **Accommodation**

78 Most of the accommodation dates from the college's opening in 1970. The annexe and several of the mobile classrooms on the main site are the subject of claims by the education assets board. The strategic plan 1995-98 has an appendix which contains a premises and facilities plan. It makes no reference to establishing a planned maintenance programme or reviewing the use made of the premises. The college's accommodation strategy document provides an overview of the accommodation existing at the time of the plan. It concludes with a summary of possible future options. It is being reviewed in line with the future needs of the college, the private finance initiative, opportunities provided by Hunter funding, and the possible confirmation of assets by the education assets board. A firm of specialist consultants is supporting this work. Links between the options listed in the accommodation strategy document, the strategic plan and the plans being formulated are not always clear.

79 The main site has two teaching blocks, an engineering workshop, nine mobiles each housing two classrooms, a boiler house, and a sports field. The main teaching block houses general classrooms, some specialist teaching rooms, staff office accommodation, the main administrative offices, the refectory, the student common room, a sports hall, a large lecture theatre with a stage, a staff lounge, and a creche. There is no separate common room for adult students. An improved reception area has been constructed recently. Teaching rooms are decorated to a reasonable standard. They are clean and free from graffiti. In some rooms and some circulation areas there is minor damage to the fabric such as stained ceilings or broken or missing ceiling tiles. The accommodation for teaching staff is too small, has poor storage facilities and lacks privacy. Lack of privacy is a particular problem for the four managers, who share a small open-plan office. The engineering workshop was constructed when

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the college was opened. It has a dated appearance internally and is dark and gloomy. The second teaching block, the Hawthorne building, was built in 1992. It provides good-quality accommodation for the learning resource centre, the learning support centre and the main computing facility. Seven of the mobiles are used as general purpose teaching rooms. Of the remaining two, one is used as the language centre and the other is a science laboratory. The mobiles are decorated to a reasonable standard but they are unpleasant to work in when there are extremes of temperature which cannot be controlled effectively. The language centre has a dated appearance. The sports field is marked out as a football pitch. It is rented to two local football teams on a Saturday and a Sunday but otherwise it is an underused asset.

80 The annexe has seven classrooms including two mobile classrooms. It is used for classroom teaching only. There is no specialist equipment on the site and no refreshment facilities. Students are timetabled there for the minimum time possible. There is a small amount of car parking space. Rooms are decorated to a reasonable standard but the general learning environment is poor. The annexe is unsupervised at certain times in the day and suffers from vandalism.

81 The St Mary's Road site in Market Harborough has three leased rooms which are suitable for the purpose to which they are put. Two of the rooms have been combined into one to form a modern computer suite. The third room is used as a general purpose classroom. The Coventry Road site in Market Harborough has a number of small rooms, leased from the county council, on the first floor of an Edwardian house close to the town centre. They provide some general teaching accommodation, and a resource base which includes computers, and rooms for general administration. There is a sign post, visible from the main road. Access for students with restricted mobility is difficult at both sites.

82 A survey of the use of space has been carried out with the help of consultants. A number of calculations have been performed using the Department for Education and Employment's guidelines and FEFC guidelines. The annexe, the use of Friday afternoons for staff meetings, the large underused lecture theatre and sports hall, the engineering workshop, and rooms not being used to their full capacity are factors which affect the use of the space available. The use of rooms is not monitored systematically. Software suitable for this purpose is available within the management information system and there are plans to develop this.

83 Budgetary provision has been made for maintenance. The major recent spend has been on a new boiler, the repointing of the main building, and the weather proofing of the mobiles.

84 Physical access to the college buildings on the main site is good for students who have restricted mobility. The main college building and the Hawthorne building have ramps, automatic doors and a lift to all floors.

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The two lifts have Braille buttons. The panels are set at an appropriate height for wheelchair users and there is a speech facility which indicates which floor the lift is on. The male changing rooms for the sports hall are on the first floor and are not accessible by lift. Minutes of the health and safety committee indicate that the college responds sympathetically to requests to improve access inside college buildings such as fitting hand rails in corridors. A few mobiles are only accessible by a flight of wooden steps and two of these can become slippery in wet conditions. Some of these steps are in a bad state of repair. The engineering block is single storey and has ramps to all entrances which provide relatively easy access for wheelchair users. The learning resource centre is fully accessible. The learning support workshop, on the first floor, is fully accessible and provides a suitable environment for students to be supported in developing their basic skills.

### **CONCLUSIONS AND ISSUES**

85 The college has the following strengths:

- a supportive and caring staff
- good provision for learning support
- an academic board which has a clearly-defined role in the review and development of college policies
- systematic quality review procedures
- students' high level of involvement in the evaluation of courses
- the high-quality training undertaken for employers
- increasing recruitment of adult students.

86 Issues to be addressed are:

- the further development of the range of provision
- inconsistencies in tutorial support
- poor attendance and retention rates on some courses
- the reliability and use of management information, including performance indicators
- inconsistencies between faculties in the effective implementation of college policies
- the quality of some of the accommodation
- the lack of systematic monitoring of the use of rooms.

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## FIGURES

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- 1 Percentage enrolments by age (as at November 1995)

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  - 2 Percentage enrolments by level of study (as at November 1995)

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  - 3 Enrolments by mode of attendance and curriculum area (as at November 1995)

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

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  - 5 Income (for 12 months to July 1995)

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  - 6 Expenditure (for 12 months to July 1995)

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

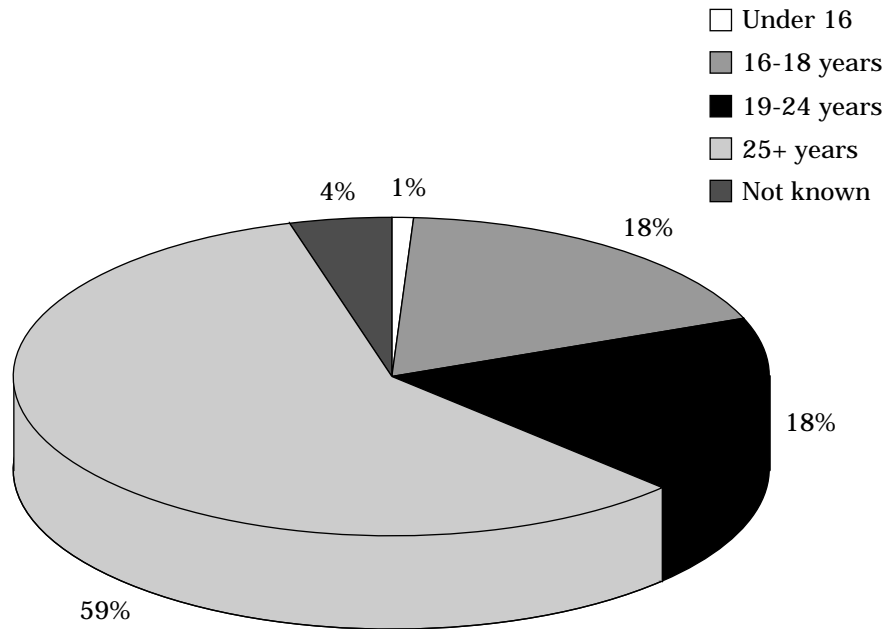
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**Figure 1**

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**Wigston College of Further Education: percentage enrolments by age (as at November 1995)**

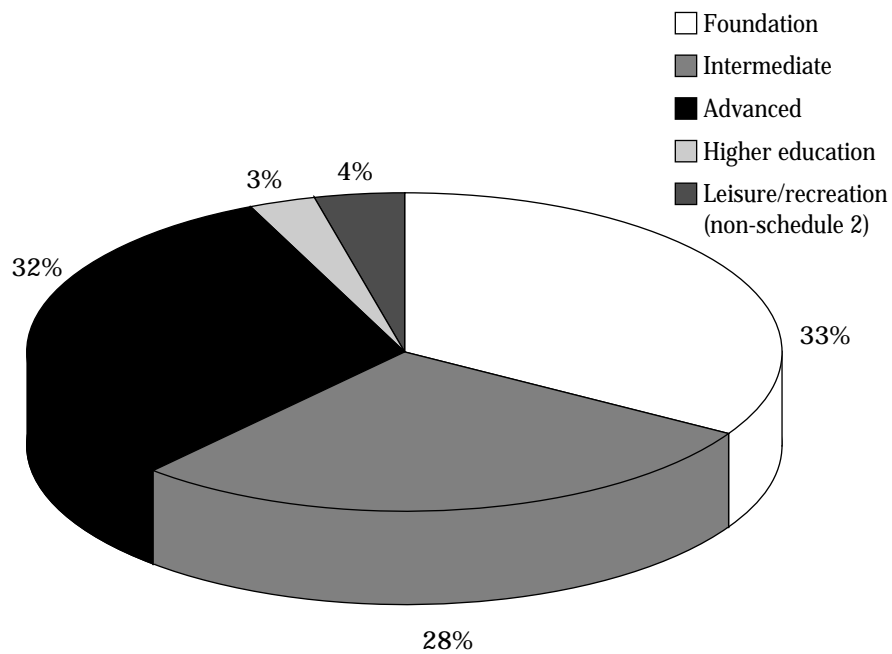


Enrolments: 3,092

**Figure 2**

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**Wigston College of Further Education: percentage enrolments by level of study (as at November 1995)**

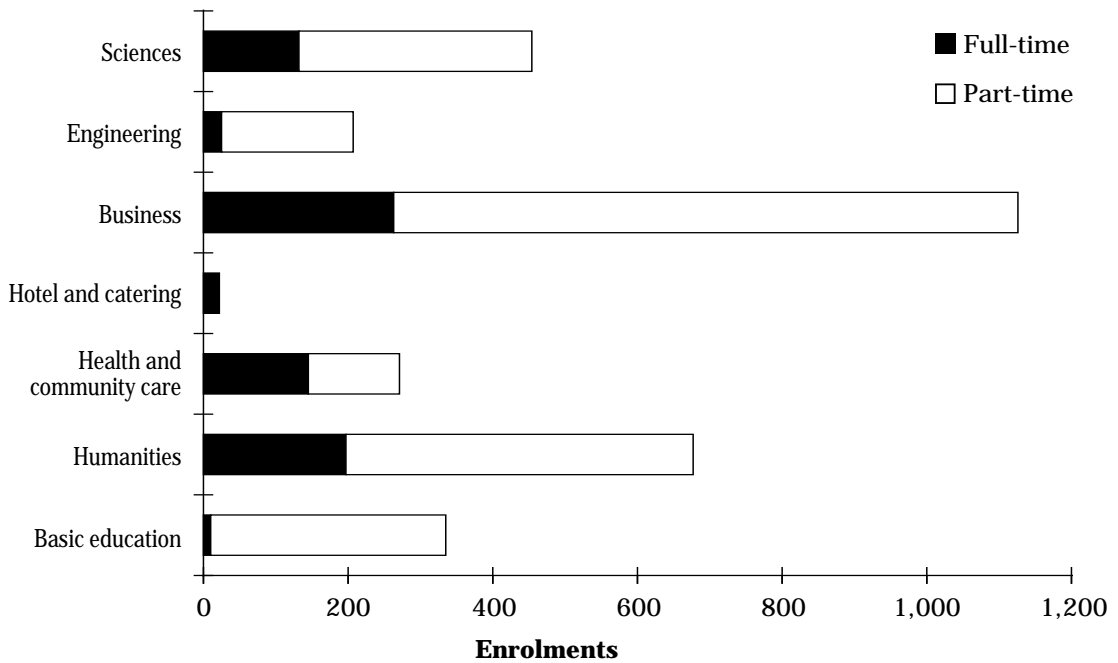


Enrolments: 3,092

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**Figure 3**

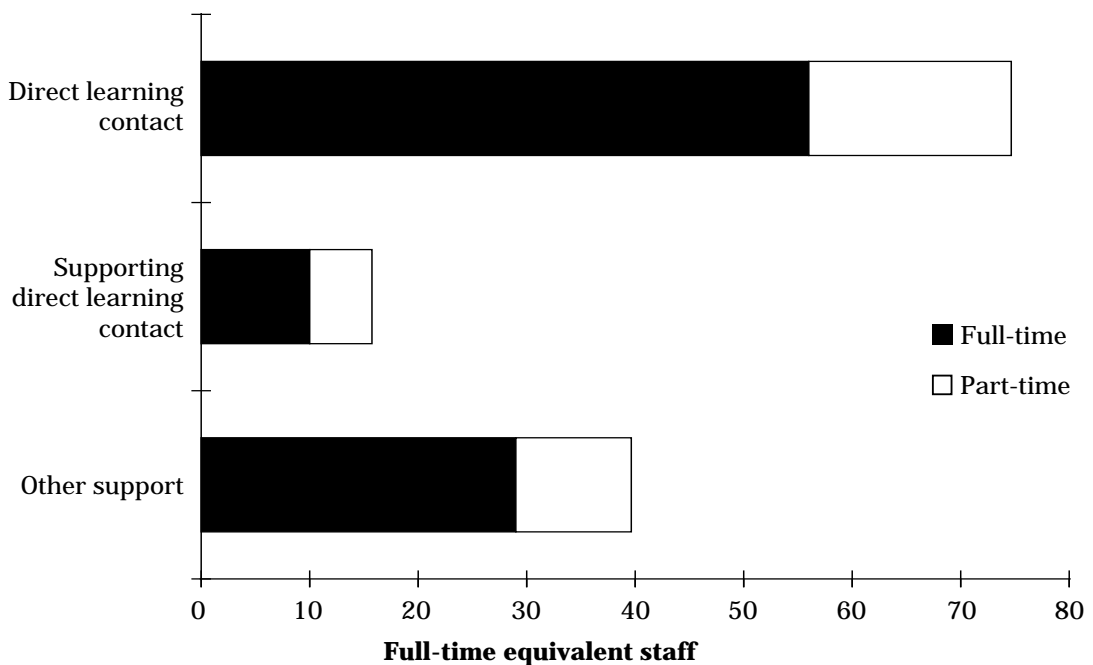
**Wigston College of Further Education: enrolments by mode of attendance and curriculum area (as at November 1995)**



Enrolments: 3,092

**Figure 4**

**Wigston College of Further Education: staff profile – staff expressed as full-time equivalents (as at July 1995)**



Full-time equivalent staff: 130

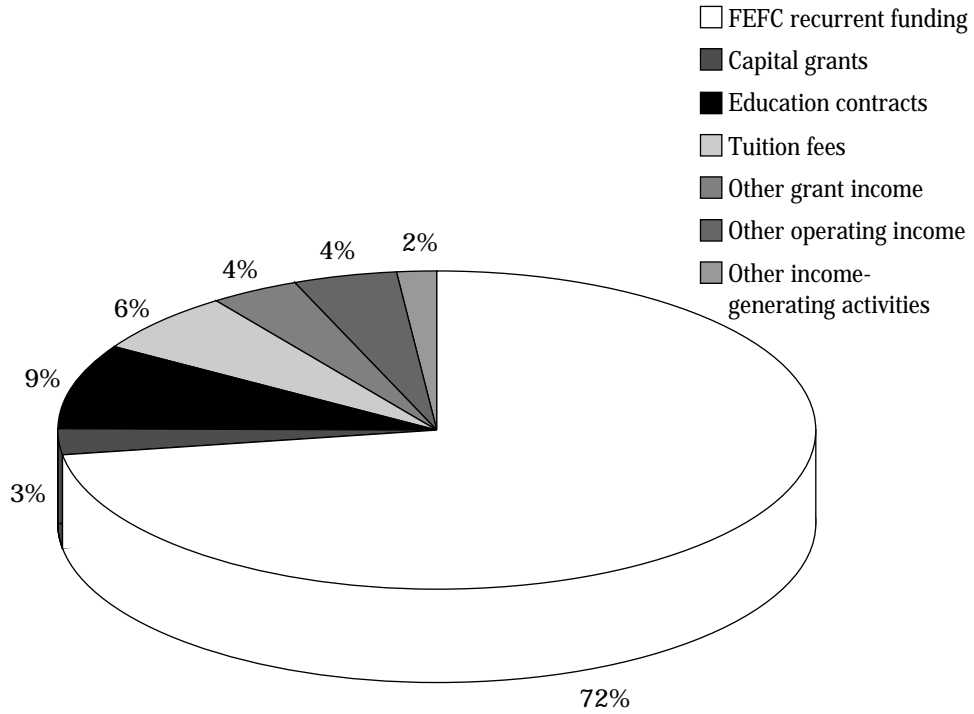


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**Figure 5**

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**Wigston College of Further Education: income (for 12 months to July 1995)**

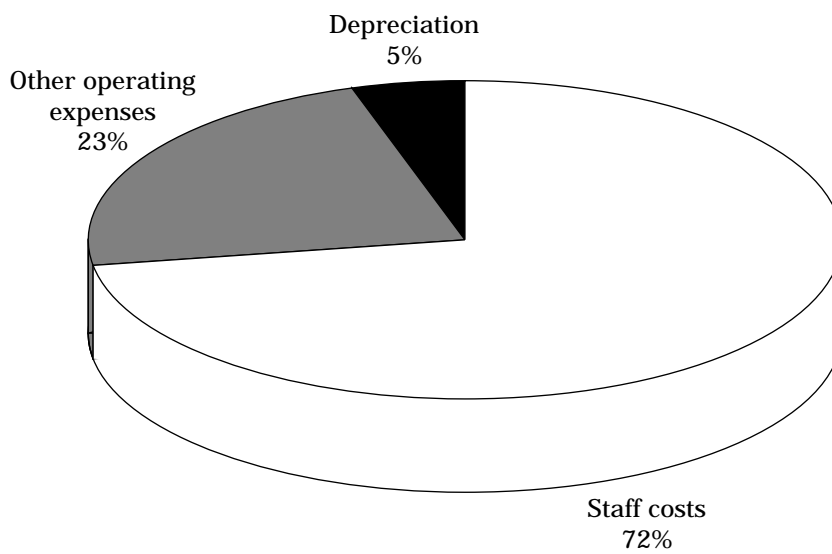


Income: £3,467,000

**Figure 6**

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**Wigston College of Further Education: expenditure (for 12 months to July 1995)**



Expenditure: £3,464,000

Published by the  
Further Education Funding Council  
July 1996