

REPORT
FROM THE
INSPECTORATE

Woking College

September 1995

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 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.

GRADE DESCRIPTORS

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

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

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FEFC INSPECTION REPORT 79/95

WOKING COLLEGE

SOUTH EAST REGION

Inspected October 1994 - March 1995

Summary

Woking College in Surrey is a small sixth form college whose students are mainly local. It is best known for its courses for 16-19 year olds and its care of students. The college's charter was commended by the Department of Education. The college failed to reach its targets for growth in student enrolments in the last two years. It has the support of active and committed governors. At present it lacks the marketing capability to fulfil its strategic play. Enthusiastic staff provide teaching of satisfactory or better quality. Of particular note are the standards achieved in music and English for speakers of other languages. Quality assurance procedures are not yet fully established and there is a lack of measurable performance targets. Central collection and analysis of data are required to underpin planning and quality control. The college should improve its management information system and make more efficient use of its accommodation. A strong lead from governors and managers is required to determine a viable direction for the college.

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

Aspects of cross-college provision	Grade
Responsiveness and range of provision	3
Governance and management	4
Students' recruitment, guidance and support	2
Quality assurance	4
Resources: staffing	2
equipment/learning resources	3
accommodation	3

Curriculum area	Grade	Curriculum area	Grade
Science and mathematics	3	Health and social care	3
Business studies	3	Art and design	3
		Music and performing arts	2
Leisure and tourism/ physical education	3	Humanities/social studies	2
		English/languages	2

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INTRODUCTION

1 Woking College in Surrey was inspected in the autumn and spring terms of the 1994-95 academic year. The inspection team of four full-time and 12 part-time inspectors spent a total of 54 days in the college. Enrolment and induction processes were observed at the beginning of the autumn term 1994, and specialist subjects were inspected during the weeks beginning 3 and 10 October 1994. Cross-college issues were inspected in the week beginning 13 March 1995.

2 Inspectors visited 139 classes and examined a representative sample of students' written and practical work. There were meetings with governors, parents, local employers, representatives of the local community and of partner schools, and with college managers, teaching and support staff and students. Discussions also took place with representatives of the Surrey Training and Enterprise Council (TEC). A wide range of documentation was examined including policy statements, minutes of committee meetings from corporation to course team level, moderator and verifier reports, and college annual reviews and reports.

THE COLLEGE AND ITS AIMS

3 Woking College was established in 1977 to provide sixth form education for pupils from local 11-16 schools. It is located on a housing estate in Old Woking, about a mile from the town centre, and adjoins the only 11-18 school in the borough. The college's accommodation was purpose built and there are extensive playing fields. Woking is one of three further education colleges in central Surrey, all of which are within easy travelling distance. There are three 11-18 schools in the college's catchment area.

4 Woking has a population of about 88,000, 5 per cent of whom are from minority ethnic, mainly Asian, backgrounds. Surrey reflects the national trend towards growth in service industries and a decline in manufacturing. Small firms predominate and the great majority of them employ fewer than 20 people. Of the students who left the college in the summer of 1994, 15 per cent took jobs in local companies. The unemployment rate in Woking is now 5 per cent, having risen to nearly 7 per cent in July 1993. Unemployment among those from minority ethnic backgrounds is three times higher than among the rest of the population.

5 The majority of Woking College students come from three partner schools in the neighbourhood. Most are able to cycle or to walk to college. The college concentrates on daytime general education courses for students aged 16 to 19. Just over half follow General Certificate of Education advanced supplementary and advanced level (GCE AS/A level) courses, and there are a growing number studying for General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQs) at foundation, intermediate and advanced levels and Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) national diploma qualifications. Three-quarters of the students are pursuing advanced level qualifications of various kinds. The Wednesday afternoon activities

programme offers a wide range of sport and recreation from which students can choose. Students also have easy access to the local authority leisure centre.

6 The college has three faculties: arts, social studies, and sciences. Each head of faculty is responsible for overseeing both academic and pastoral aspects of students' programmes. Most full-time teachers also act as personal tutors. The director of student support is responsible for welfare advice, counselling and for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

7 There are 638 students, an increase of only 19 in the last two years. The college did not reach the target it had agreed with the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) last year and has not yet achieved its target for the current year. Growth in student numbers has been only 3 per cent over two years, compared with the national targets of 16 per cent. There are 66 part-time students, 40 of whom are adults, studying GCE A level subjects alongside younger students in normal daytime classes. Enrolments by age and level of study are shown in figures 1 and 2. Enrolments by mode of attendance and curriculum area are shown in figure 3. The college has 47.4 full-time equivalent teachers and 17.1 full-time equivalent technical and support staff. A staff profile, with staff expressed as full-time equivalents, is shown in figure 4.

8 The college's stated mission is to provide high-quality education and training in a supportive environment. It aims to respond to the education and training needs of Woking borough and the wider community.

RESPONSIVENESS AND RANGE OF PROVISION

9 The college offers 37 GCE A level subjects, 20 AS subjects and six General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) subjects. The college decided to reduce its commitment to GCSE retakes in favour of developing GNVQs, which are often more suitable for students. Five GNVQs are available at advanced, intermediate and foundation levels. Five courses are designed specifically for adults and approval has been gained for nursery nursing courses. The college is involved in TEC-sponsored work with Woking district council and others, to provide English for adult speakers of other languages from minority ethnic communities. Adult basic skills are taught in the college's new learner support centre, but so far there are few students. There is a small number of part-time courses in language proficiency and information technology. The full-time timetable for next academic year is being revised to help adults to attend GCE A level classes. The college runs an access course one day each week for a term, to enable underachieving 15-year-old pupils in one of its partner schools to experience further education and to improve their basic skills. So far, eight of these pupils have applied to study at the college next year.

10 Liaison with the college's three partner schools is generally good. Teachers and heads of department at the college visit the schools to speak to staff and pupils about their subjects. Pupils from one of the schools visit

the college for a half-day taster event. There are open evenings for prospective applicants and their parents.

11 Links with higher education are good. The college is a member of the Surrey Compact which guarantees interviews for students at a number of universities. Membership of the compact has stimulated the formation of teacher advisory committees which bring together teachers from the local schools and the college to discuss GCE A level and other curricular developments. The college participates in the University of Surrey's student tutoring scheme.

12 Most staff are aware of the national targets for education and training. Good links with business and industry give students the opportunity for work experience and work shadowing. The college has run an enterprise and technology day for several years which involves students working on an industrial project and presenting their findings to company managers for judgement. Links with the community are good. The college is involved in the town twinning scheme with Le Plessis Robinson in France and plans to send two or three students to its trade fair. There are growing links with local minority ethnic communities.

13 The college has advertised its courses in the local media. However, the prospectus is aimed at school leavers and makes no mention of opportunities for adults. Leaflets are used to promote adult study and consideration is now being given to publishing a single comprehensive prospectus or two documents of similar standard. The college has no marketing strategy to meet the very competitive circumstances in which it is operating. The college and its governors have yet to agree the extent to which they should offer more adult education, even though the number of 16 year olds is expected to remain almost static for some years to come and there are clear signs that the opportunities for them to remain in school sixth forms may increase. Poor market research and the lack of a definite marketing policy are critical deficiencies which the college should address urgently. There are two people involved in marketing, one of whom is responsible for marketing the curriculum and the other for marketing assets. There is confusion below senior management level about who is responsible for achieving growth in student numbers.

14 The college's charter was commended in the recent college charter competition run by the Department for Education. A working party has been established to revise some of the standards set out in the charter and to devise performance measures.

GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

15 The corporation board has 17 members. There are nine independent members who represent the business community, one member nominated by the TEC, two parents, two co-opted members, one student, one staff member and the principal. Members have expertise in accountancy, banking, further education administration, higher education, industrial

relations and law. The board has established five committees: audit, education, estates, finance and policy, and remuneration. Their terms of reference are clear. The level of attendance at meetings is high. Board and committee papers show that business is concentrated on planning and control issues. Members understand their strategic role and avoid the day-to-day operational matters which are the responsibility of the principal.

16 The corporation receives financial information on a regular basis. It allows members to exercise their duty of oversight with confidence. The chairman of the finance and policy committee has drawn the board's attention to the consequences of the shortfall in student enrolments and senior managers are producing a plan for dealing with this. Although board members take an interest in the college which goes well beyond discussions in committee, they recognise that they need to know the college better if they are to be more effective in planning its future. The corporation has now agreed to attach governors to each faculty, a move which should help them to identify potential opportunities and difficulties earlier than at present.

17 The college's mission statement and strategic plan make a clear commitment to catering for the needs of a wide range of potential students. Nevertheless, a concern persists among governors that any development should not change the nature of the college's work and character. This tension is also found among senior managers and staff in general. The college should determine with some urgency which elements from its past are of real importance and which can be discarded safely in the interests of progress.

18 The college has policies for its major areas of operation. Allocation of responsibility for their management is reasonably clear. However, little has been done to implement some of them and to examine whether or not they are effective.

19 The college has made significant changes to its management structure recently. Reorganisation of middle management has brought into being heads of faculty who have both pastoral and curriculum responsibilities. Staff see this as a positive move and say that it makes lines of communication and accountability clearer. However, some staff seek to by-pass heads of faculty if they believe it to be to their advantage and senior managers sometimes encourage this. If this practice were to continue, the new structure would quickly fail. The size of the senior management team has been reduced, cutting the college's staffing costs. A new bursar with experience of controlling large projects has joined the team. Another change will occur with the retirement of the principal later this year.

20 In 1994-95, the college's unit of funding is £20.11. The median for sixth form colleges is £19.81. The college's income and expenditure for the 16 months to July 1994 are shown in figures 5 and 6. There is a sound

system for control of expenditure by budget holders. The basis of revenue budgets remains historical. Budgets are not linked to student numbers or to any system for assessing the cost of teaching each subject. The college has commissioned consultants to advise on unit costing. It is essential that the college should move quickly to a position where senior managers have more detailed financial information in order to help them make difficult decisions with confidence.

21 The management information system requires improvement. The college is considering ways of upgrading it with an electronic student registration system and integrating financial and student data. Examination results are easy to collate for GCE A levels and GCSE and there is adequate information about student retention rates at course and faculty levels. Relevant student data are not yet available to senior managers throughout the year as a matter of routine. Accurate data would better enable the college to set targets for measuring its progress.

STUDENTS' RECRUITMENT, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

22 The responsibility for pastoral care of students at various stages in their college careers is divided between the director of student support, the director of studies and the three heads of faculty. The college has policies for all aspects of admissions, guidance and support and staff are clear about their part in implementing them. Most students are familiar with the charter and understand their entitlements and their obligations.

23 Pre-entry guidance for potential applicants takes place through a series of presentations in the partner schools, open evenings and, in the case of one partner school, a morning of classes at the college. Pupils in their final year of compulsory schooling are encouraged to visit several colleges. The college has explicit guidelines for the conduct of interviews. Applicants are well informed by the prospectus which is followed up with additional information. The college responds quickly to queries. Of particular note are the support and guidance offered at the pre-entry stage to students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There is a careful assessment of their needs.

24 During enrolment week, a varied programme of events helps students to find their way and settle into the college. There is formal induction to courses. Staff guidance on how to arrange induction encourages ice-breaking activities and sensitivity to the needs of new students. Students are placed in tutor groups during induction and this helps foster their confidence in the college and their prospects for the future.

25 At induction, all GCSE, foundation and intermediate GNVQ students take diagnostic tests designed by the Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Unit. Students in need of help are referred to the newly-established learning-support centre where they are given further tests to determine more precisely their needs in literacy and numeracy. For students with dyslexia

and students for whom English is a second language, courses are offered in study skills such as essay writing. Although still in its infancy, the centre has already assisted 102 students.

26 The college has recently introduced procedures for the accreditation of students' prior learning. Although used only on a small scale, they have facilitated exceptional entry to some courses.

27 There is a strong emphasis on pastoral support and tutors are committed to it. There are clear guidelines for tutorial work and there has been a staff-development programme to instill good practice. Tutorial periods are divided into two parts. The first lasts half an hour and is devoted to giving information to the whole tutor group. In the remainder of the time tutors see small groups of individuals by appointment. There are also personal tutorials where tutors meet individual students. Discussion is based on a review of the student's progress and includes action planning, using the national record of achievement, which involves the students in setting his/her own learning objectives. Students have a clear understanding of the process and a realistic appreciation of their progress.

28 Well-produced guide books help students to understand their work in the college, including work in broadly applicable areas such as information technology. Their options for progression are laid out clearly in a comprehensive careers education programme, some of which is part of a wider scheme of personal and social development for which students are accredited through the Surrey Open College. The programme is much valued by students. Careers advice is evaluated through student questionnaires, as are the merits of careers events such as the Higher Education Conference and the Higher Education Fair. There are compact agreements which guarantee interviews with Kingston University, Sussex University, Farnborough College of Technology, Surrey University and Hertfordshire University. Tutors are given guidelines for the completion of Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) references. Students are prepared thoroughly for portfolio presentation in art, and for music and drama auditions. Advice is given during the UCAS clearing process. Students participate in work experience, work shadowing and mock interviews with local companies. Work experience is available to GCE A level students but only a few take advantage of the opportunity.

TEACHING AND THE PROMOTION OF LEARNING

29 Of the 139 sessions inspected, 51 per cent had strengths which clearly outweighed weaknesses. In 4 per cent, the weaknesses clearly outweighed the strengths. Work of a high standard was seen in music and in the teaching of English as a second language. The following table summarises the grades given to the sessions inspected.

Teaching sessions: inspection grades by programme of study

Programmes	Grade	1	2	3	4	5	Totals
GCE AS/A level		11	40	28	2	0	81
GCSE		0	3	3	0	0	6
GNVQ		0	5	22	4	0	31
Other		6	6	9	0	0	21
Total		17	54	62	6	0	139

30 There are schemes of work for almost every subject. The best examples are those for social studies, music and the performing arts which include: objectives which are broader than those required for examination success, arrangements for students' induction into the course, descriptions of the intended teaching and learning strategies, and reference to the procedures for assessment. Few schemes included reference to the resources required to support teaching and learning. There is little consultation about schemes of work and good practice is often not disseminated. The scheme for the GNVQ intermediate and advanced level courses in leisure and tourism does not cover all the specified underpinning knowledge. The lack of detail in the work plans for the courses in classical civilisation and general studies resulted in some poorly prepared lessons in which the aims and objectives were not clear and the content was unrelated to other topics.

31 The best teaching was thoroughly prepared and teachers used appropriate methods to stimulate students. The aims of the lesson were made explicit at the outset. Introducing a new module of work in sociology, the teacher made effective use of students' existing knowledge and opinions to set an agenda. Small groups of students explored the main sociological perspectives, with the teacher contributing as required. Students demonstrated what they had learned by reporting their findings to the whole class.

32 Music students were clearly benefiting from expert tuition. The emphasis was on the improvement of performance skills and teachers underlined the importance of professional standards. Individual teaching given to music students working on a dissertation or composition was effective. Students on the BTEC national diploma in performing arts course were seen preparing a piece of rock music; a director and a technician were chosen and, after a brief rehearsal, a good performance was given. Students' instrumental skills were exceptional and the setting, and the equipment used, accurately reflected professional circumstances. Students perform away from the classroom, at concerts in the college and in public. They also take part in national competitions.

33 Attempts to tailor activities to the needs of individual students on language courses met with varying success. In one well-conducted class some students were using a video in a room next to the main room where

the teacher conducted intensive conversation practice with a second group of students; a third group tackled written exercises to reinforce their earlier work. All three groups were engaged in equally appropriate study. Less successful was a class made up of students on a one-year GCSE course and first and second-year GCE A level students. The lecturer moved frequently from one group to another, but students of lower ability sometimes had little to do and their concentration and motivation ebbed away.

34 Low motivation was seen in a number of curriculum areas, for example in GCSE English classes and some GNVQ science sessions. Staff in art and design were sometimes too tolerant of students who were reluctant to make decisions about their work, and the resulting discussions distracted others.

35 The classes for students learning English as a second language were outstanding. A group of multi-lingual students responded enthusiastically to a teacher who skilfully explained the tasks to be tackled and responded sensitively to their difficulties. The students were constantly stretched but they responded well and showed a growing capacity to make progress in their learning.

36 With the advent of GNVQ, the college has begun to develop resources specifically designed to support students working on their own. It has made good progress in a number of curriculum areas, including communications and social studies. In leisure and tourism, there was a heavy emphasis on assignments. Students in their second year were taught in too prescriptive a manner; they were not given enough opportunity to think for themselves, and to work on their own or in small groups. The standard of tuition in core skills varies across the curriculum areas. In science and in leisure and tourism, core skills are successfully integrated with other aspects of the subject. In mathematics, students have to work on outdated computers and this hinders their understanding of the subject as well as their development of core skills.

37 Work experience plays a growing part in vocational courses. Together with field work, it contributes much to the quality of the business studies programme and to many of the foundation and intermediate level GNVQs. However, on the GNVQ advanced course in health and social care, the occurrence of work placements late in the college year limits the extent to which practical experience can be integrated with the theory taught in college. The lack of work experience on the GNVQ courses in science obscures the vocational perspectives of the subject.

38 Inconsistencies in assessment practice were evident both between and within faculties. In the performing arts, social studies, leisure and tourism, and health and social care, appropriate criteria for marking have been developed and assignments are appropriately challenging. However, in subjects, such as biology and chemistry, staff appear to have reached no agreement on assessment standards and there were no guidelines for marking. In many subjects, more detailed guidance on assessment should be given to ensure that work is marked consistently. When commenting

on work, teachers need to identify the key points and the action to be taken by students to improve the quality of their work. Most coursework records are up to date and are properly maintained. Extensive use is made of value-added data, which involves a comparison of students' present performances with their previous levels of achievement, to advise individual students on their potential and progress. When it is used properly, this is a helpful feature of the college's assessment practice.

39 The average size of teaching groups is small. The need to combine year groups and, on occasions, different courses to assemble a viable class sometimes leads to poor work. At the other extreme, the very large classes, in leisure and tourism for example, require careful management to ensure that every student has appropriate opportunities for learning.

STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENTS

40 The majority of students are satisfied with their choice of college and course. Many chose to come to Woking because of its supportive ambience and friendly staff. They pursue their studies with enjoyment and enthusiasm, participate in discussion and are confident in describing their work. Throughout the college, students work hard and are generally well motivated. Music students demonstrate an impressive depth of understanding. Their compositions show a high level of enterprise, innovation and confidence, while their dissertations explore their chosen topics with thoroughness and maturity. Levels of understanding and knowledge in science were less impressive among GNVQ students, who lacked an understanding of basic scientific concepts. Standards of written English were weak in a number of subjects and were not always corrected.

41 Students' ability to work together in groups is effectively developed in many areas of the curriculum. In the performing arts, students participated in the Hamlet Project which involved young people from England, Germany and Denmark in a performance at the New Globe Theatre in London. Students worked well in the groups used to teach information technology in business studies.

42 The achievement of core and study skills varies across the college. Leisure studies students brought proficiency in information technology with them from their schools. Students in English write and speak well. Those studying languages coped well with a variety of learning styles. Students receiving learning support are encouraged to record their progress but, as yet, not all have acquired appropriate study skills or are capable of independent learning.

43 The published record of the college's examination performance was audited and found to be accurate. Results of GCSE and GCE AS/A level examinations are held centrally by the examinations officer. Vocational course records and results, apart from those from some specialist courses in business and art and design, are normally held by the course coordinator. The haphazard storage of some of these records puts them at

risk. The use of information on students' achievements to monitor courses regularly, and to compare their effectiveness, would be made easier if such information was kept together and more carefully organised.

44 Retention rates vary. All transfers and withdrawals are recorded but records are held at course or faculty level and the senior management team do not monitor them regularly. In 1992-93 the withdrawal rate was only 5 per cent (31 of 619 students) and in 1993-94 a little higher at 7.2 per cent (45 of 626 students). In the current year to March 1995, withdrawals stand at 3.7 per cent (24 of 638 students). The high level of retention implies that examination pass rates are a good indicator of the proportion of the students who started each course and eventually achieved the award they sought. College records show that of the 45 students who withdrew in 1993-94, 16 went into jobs, five moved abroad, six went to other further education institutions and the destinations of 18 were unknown.

45 Students aged 16-18 entered for GCE AS/A level examinations in 1993-94 scored, on average, 4.3 points per entry (where A=10, E=2). This places the college among the top third of colleges in the further education sector on this performance measure, based on the data in the 1994 tables published by the Department for Education.

46 GCE A level results in 16 subjects improved between 1993 and 1994. In 1994, 15 subjects of the 37 on offer had pass rates above the national averages for sixth form colleges. Eight subjects had pass rates above the national average in both 1993 and 1994. Seventeen subjects had pass rates below the national averages for those subjects in 1994, and 14 were more than 10 per cent below the national averages in both years.

47 GCE AS results in three subjects improved between 1993 and 1994. Seven of the 20 on offer had pass grades above the national averages for sixth form colleges in 1994 and four had pass rates above the national average in both 1993 and 1994. In psychology and French, results which were already above the national average improved.

48 In 1993, the percentage of entries achieving grades A-C were above the national average for sixth form colleges in six GCSE subjects. In 1994, this rose to seven subjects. In 1993, when a greater range of subjects was available, 11 subjects had pass rates, grades A-C, below the national average for the subject, but in 1994 this had reduced to only one.

49 Vocational courses comprise approximately 44 per cent of the college's work. The college's statistics record the achievement of full awards. On the BTEC national diploma course in business and finance, every student gained the full award in both 1993 and 1994. Two of the GNVQ foundation courses also achieved 100 per cent pass rates in 1994. In business studies, students on computer literacy and information technology and RSA Examinations Board wordprocessing courses all exceeded the national average pass rates. On the Surrey Open College foundation course in art there was a 100 per cent pass rate in both 1993 and 1994.

50 Ninety-five per cent of students, aged 16-18, in the final year of study on the vocational courses included in the 1994 performance tables published by the Department for Education, were successful. This places the college in the top third of colleges in the further education sector.

51 Destinations of students are monitored thoroughly. The college achieves a commendably high response rate from students. In 1993, the destinations of all students were known. Only 1.5 per cent were unknown in 1994. In 1994, progression to higher education was 61.5 per cent, a reduction from 70 per cent in 1993. Progression to other further education was 10 per cent in both years. The record for 1994 shows that, of the 22 students who went on to further education, half transferred to other institutions to complete their GCE A level studies. In both 1993 and 1994, progression into employment was 10 per cent. The college has devolved responsibility for detailed monitoring of examination results, including GNVQ and other vocational course tests and unit assessments, to faculties and course teams. Senior managers need regular access to co-ordinated cross-college statistics if they are to control quality and plan for the future.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

52 The college's quality assurance procedures are at an early stage of development. There is a college quality group, led by the director of studies, which is responsible for the development of the college's quality statement. This statement lays down some performance indicators and describes the curriculum review and evaluation cycle. It defines what the college will require of its staff in terms of annual reporting on the curriculum, staff appraisal, staff development, publicity and marketing, finance, estates and administration. A staff handbook ensures that staff are aware of the record keeping procedures required to meet the college's approach to quality assurance. The new management structure clearly identifies the roles and responsibilities of staff in quality matters.

53 The first steps in implementing the process have made the college aware of the need to set targets and to use performance indicators. Some staff have been setting their own targets and the college could usefully build on their experience. Staff would be helped if there were clarification in the quality statement of the relationship between quality control, quality assurance and quality improvement. The college's management information is not collated quickly enough to enable any disadvantageous trends to be identified and corrected during the year.

54 There is a simple structure of course and faculty review which was launched a year ago. Annual reports show the variable quality of evidence available to course teams. Courses and subjects have no measurable targets to achieve and this makes it difficult for them to undertake rigorous self-evaluation.

55 The college uses the national Advanced Level Information System which provides comparative data on whether or not students improve on the GCE A level grades predicted from their GCSE results. It also uses its own student achievement motivation indicator. This is based on an entry index which records each student's achievement of GCSE grades A-C. In subject areas the entry index for each student can be compared with previous entry profiles and GCE A level examination results. Staff use this information to compare the achievements of each year group and to assess how well each student is doing in comparison with expectations. Dependence on the student achievement motivation indicator and the Advanced Level Information System is deflecting staff from considering the college's performance against national averages. Prediction of each student's likely result on the basis of a student achievement motivation indicator is inhibiting staff in urging their students to surpass expectations.

56 Staff development is managed by the vice-principal. Criteria are set to meet college and individual needs. Some requirements derived from the strategic plan have already been met. For example, staff working on GNVQs held a residential weekend to develop the new programmes. Staff find it easy to get funding for external staff development. They report their experiences to colleagues and to the vice-principal.

57 Newly-qualified staff appreciate the induction arrangements made for them. Experienced staff who are new to the college are positive about the informal induction opportunities the college offers and the arrangements to provide mentors. Records of staff development activities do not enable managers to readily identify which individual and college requirements have been met. In the vocational areas in particular, some staff need to gain current experience of industry. Senior managers need additional skills to enable them to fulfil the strategic plan and implement the quality assurance policy.

58 The college has an appraisal programme for all staff. It runs in a two-year cycle and a number of staff have been appraised. The process has been well received. The process includes classroom observation but suggests that the college has yet to capitalise on the process.

59 The college's self-assessment report was written using the headings in the Council Circular 93/28, *Assessing Achievement*. The college's assessment of the quality of the programme areas was generally in line with the inspection findings. In respect of the cross-college aspects the report did not fully appreciate the seriousness of some of the weaknesses, and has no plans for addressing them.

RESOURCES

Staffing

60 Teaching staff have been reduced slightly in the past two years from 49.1 full-time equivalents to 47.4 full-time equivalents, while student

numbers have grown slightly. In the same period, the student to staff ratio has increased from 12.0:1 to 13.5:1, although the college has set a target of 15:1 to be achieved by 1995-96. The proportions of full-time and part-time posts have changed little over the last three years. Currently there are 49 full-time and 15.5 part-time posts.

61 Teachers are enthusiastic about their work and committed to their students. Most are suitably qualified for the work they undertake. Over 90 per cent have appropriate degrees or professional qualifications and the remainder have the necessary minimum qualifications for the subjects they teach. There are gaps in the industrial experience of teachers in some vocational areas such as business, health care, science, and leisure and tourism. Nearly 80 per cent of teachers have a recognised teaching qualification. Eleven per cent hold the appropriate Training and Development Lead Body assessor and verifier awards, a satisfactory provision for the number of vocational courses in the college. Two of the five members of the senior management team are women and the balance among other senior staff at college policy group level is about the same. Women make up half the teaching staff of the college. Two-thirds of support staff are women.

62 Part-time teachers make an important contribution to courses and to the development work of course teams. Their current industrial experience and awareness of modern practices is of real benefit to the college, particularly in the vocational curriculum.

Equipment/learning resources

63 Equipment is sufficient in quantity and of an appropriate quality for the college's courses. In most classrooms there is a selection of teaching and visual aids. Some specialist equipment is good. The best was seen in business studies, science, information technology, and music. There are resource rooms in several areas which are equipped with computers, texts and reference material. In music, there is a good collection of recordings, sheet music and reference books. The range of musical instruments, audio and video recorders is wide. In the performing arts section, there are computers running dedicated software and a 16-track recording console capable of producing work of professional standard.

64 Inadequacies exist in several areas. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities do not have sufficient access to information technology; there are only three computers available to them. Students studying mathematics use outdated computers and cannot use the software required for their level of study.

65 The college has a computerised assets register. There is no programme for replacement of equipment and the college relies on annual bids from faculties to keep up to date. Purchase of new equipment requires agreement by the course team, team leader, head of faculty and college policy group before the corporation board's approval is sought. A period

of negotiation follows before purchases are made. In 1994-95, the capital equipment budget was £42,000, about 35 per cent of which was spent on computing. An information technology committee has been formed to co-ordinate the purchase of new equipment and to ensure that software is standardised. There are 76 computer workstations accessible to students. About 40 per cent of these are below the appropriate specification. The college plans to upgrade its equipment and to buy five compact disk read-only memory (CD-ROM) database machines for the library. The current stock of computers allows one for every eight students.

66 The library provides a satisfactory service to most students. It is very small with only about 30 study spaces tightly packed together. There are no study carrels. Students share classroom desks. There are 18,000 books and the library subscribes to 30 periodicals. The 1994-95 budget is £6,000, an increase of 18 per cent over last year's allocation. The budget is allocated on the basis of faculty requests. There is good provision for some GCE A level courses. However, books for GNVQ programmes in business and tourism are out of date.

Accommodation

67 The college has a single site. There are four buildings of which three were constructed in the late 1970s and one in 1993. Most are single storey. The older buildings have flat roofs, some of which have been recovered recently but at least one still leaks. The layout is confusing. External signs directing visitors to reception are clear but internal signs are small and easily missed. The main entrance is small and does not project a good image of the college.

68 Access for students and staff using wheelchairs is satisfactory in most of the buildings. There is no access to the first floor of the main building and the college plans to install a lift.

69 The quality of the internal decor is variable. Wall displays of students' work are used to improve the environment in many rooms and corridors. The number of carpeted areas is being increased.

70 The college has surveyed its buildings and knows where improvements are required. The learning support area has been upgraded recently. The layout of the main block was planned to provide large open-study spaces for the new courses. The college still has a number of small rooms with a capacity of about 12 places which make efficient working difficult to achieve. Some of the specialist accommodation, including a gymnasium, sports hall and theatre, are not fully used.

CONCLUSIONS AND ISSUES

71 The strengths of the college are:

- teaching and learning in music and English for speakers of other languages
- pastoral care and the personal and social development of students
- community links and the high reputation of the college locally
- the enthusiasm of the teaching staff
- the college charter.

72 In order to improve the quality of provision the college should address:

- the future direction of the college
- the need to increase student numbers
- the development of a marketing strategy
- the continued development of quality assurance procedures
- the management information system
- the further development of management skills
- the inefficiency of space utilisation
- the inadequate size and capacity of the library.

FIGURES

-
- 1 Percentage enrolments by age (1994-95)

 - 2 Percentage enrolments by level of study (1994-95)

 - 3 Enrolments by mode of attendance and curriculum area (1994-95)

 - 4 Staff profile – staff expressed as full-time equivalents (1994-95)

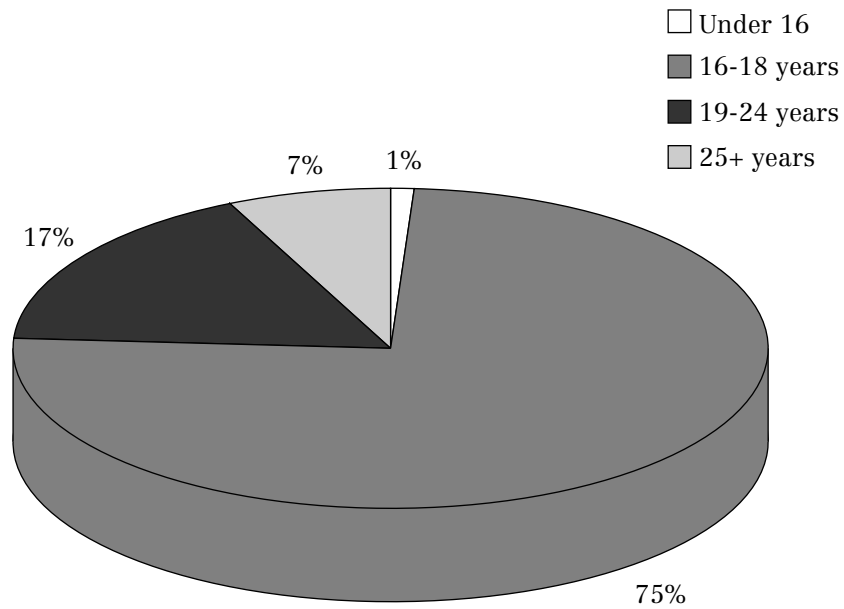
 - 5 Income (for 16 months to July 1994)

 - 6 Expenditure (for 16 months to July 1994)

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

Figure 1

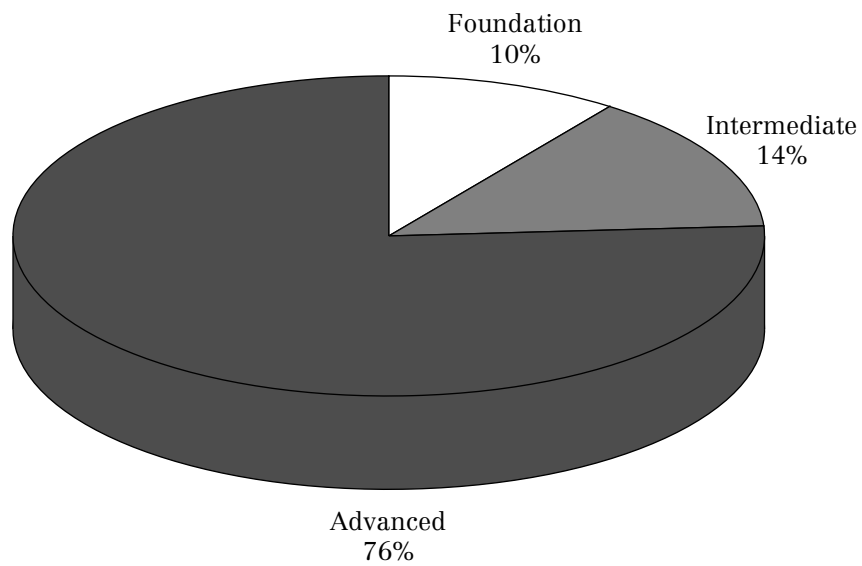
Woking College: percentage enrolments by age (1994-95)



Enrolments: 638

Figure 2

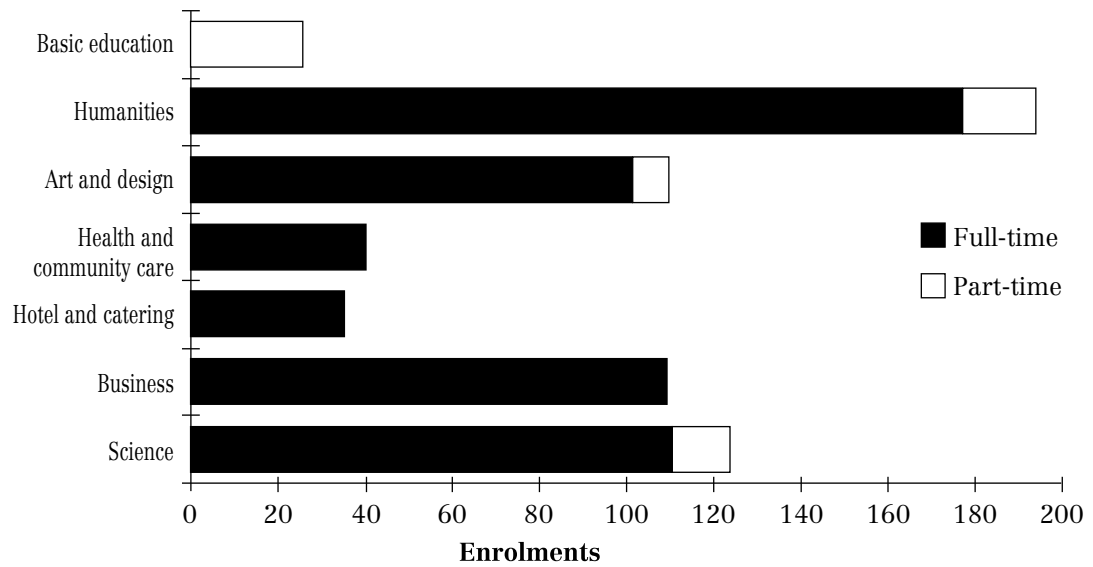
Woking College: percentage enrolments by level of study (1994-95)



Enrolments: 638

Figure 3

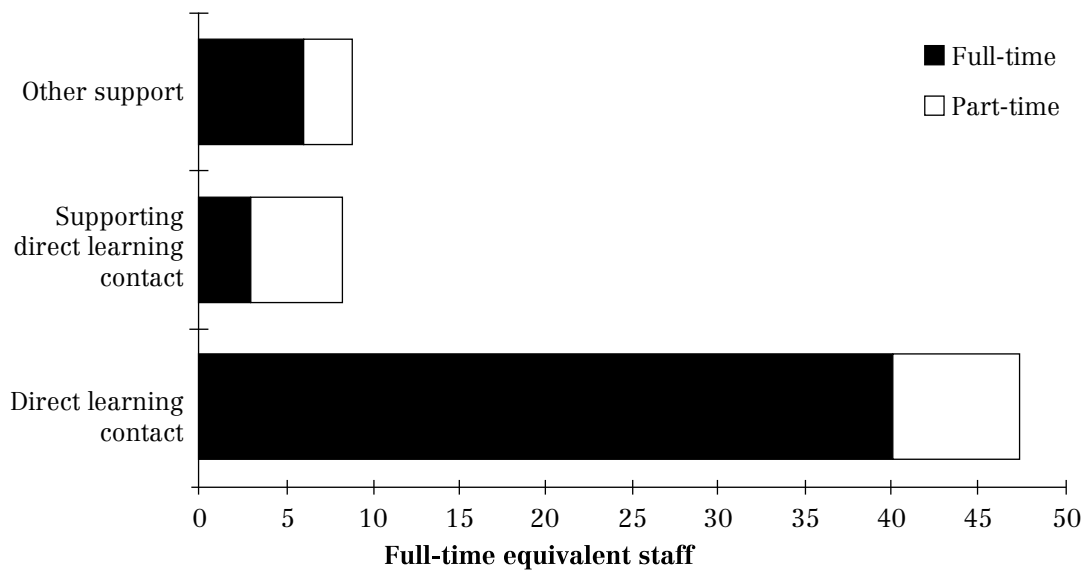
Woking College: enrolments by mode of attendance and curriculum area (1994-95)



Enrolments: 638

Figure 4

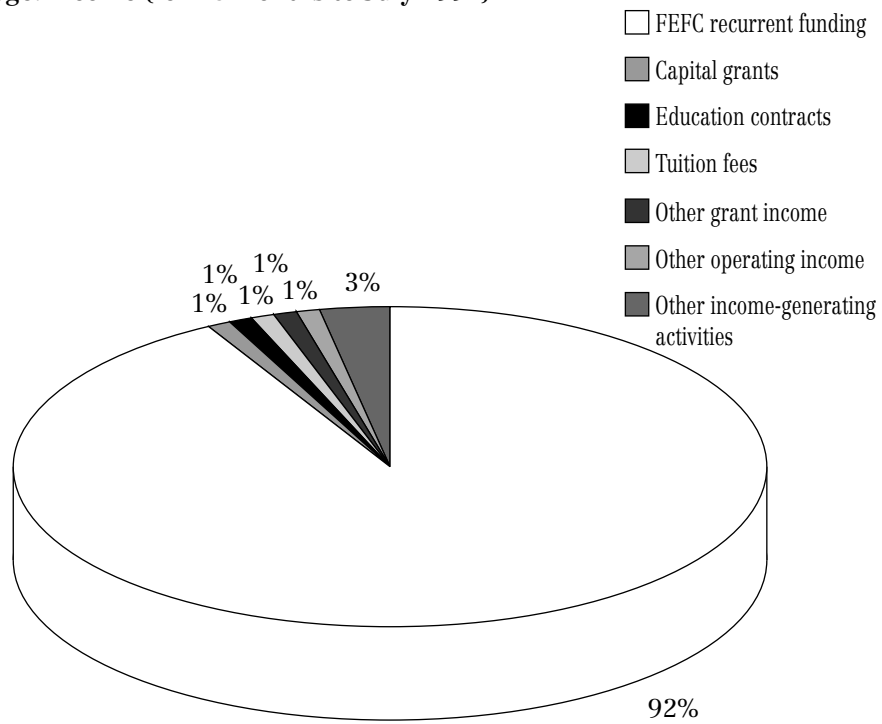
Woking College: staff profile – expressed as full-time equivalents (1994-95)



Full-time equivalent staff: 65

Figure 5

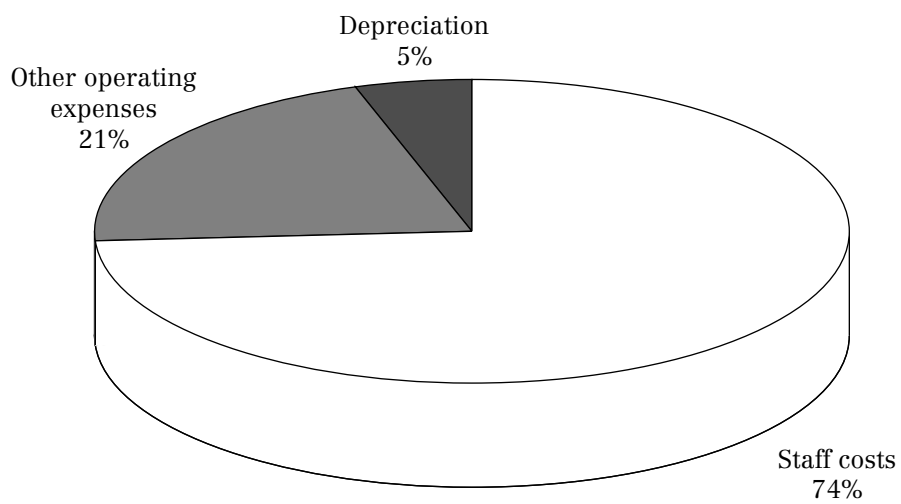
Woking College: income (for 16 months to July 1994)



Income: £2,786,589

Figure 6

Woking College: expenditure (for 16 months to July 1994)



Expenditure: £2,850,238

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