

**REPORT
FROM THE
INSPECTORATE**

Worthing Sixth Form College

July 1994

**THE
FURTHER
EDUCATION
FUNDING
COUNCIL**

THE FURTHER EDUCATION FUNDING COUNCIL

The Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) has a statutory duty to ensure that there are satisfactory arrangements to assess the quality of provision in the further education sector. It discharges the duty in part through its inspectorate, which inspects and reports on each college in the sector every four years. The Council's inspectorate also assesses and reports on a national basis on specific curriculum areas and advises the Council's quality assessment committee.

College inspections involve both full-time inspectors and registered part-time inspectors who have specialist knowledge and experience in the areas they inspect. Inspection teams normally include at least one member from outside the world of education and a nominated member of staff from the college being inspected.

GRADE DESCRIPTORS

The procedures for assessing quality are described in the Council Circular 93/28. In the course of inspecting colleges, inspectors assess the strengths and weaknesses of each aspect of provision they inspect. Their assessments are set out in the reports. They also summarise their judgements on the balance between strengths and weaknesses using a five-point scale. 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 35/94

WORTHING SIXTH FORM COLLEGE

SOUTH EAST REGION

Inspected September 1993 - February 1994

Summary

Worthing Sixth Form College provides a wide range of General Certificate of Education and General Certificate of Secondary Education courses almost exclusively for full-time students in the 16-19 age range. It is beginning to develop General National Vocational Qualifications, part-time courses for adults and provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The quality of the teaching is good. This, together with the professional commitment of teaching and support staff and the motivation of the students, leads to high levels of achievement in external examinations. The college has forged effective links with its partner schools and enjoys the support of the local community and parents. The college provides good pastoral support and guidance for its students, although it fails to make best use of the staff time devoted to tutorials. The college lacks policies on key issues such as equal opportunities. There is no college policy on quality and its assurance; existing practices are informal and fragmented. Management and academic structures in the college are too complex for a small institution with a straightforward curriculum provision. The college should refine its plans for development, and provide a clearer rationale for the directions it intends to take.

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

Aspects of cross-college provision	Grade
Responsiveness and range of provision	2
Governance and management	3
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	2	Art & design	3
Mathematics	2	Theatre studies	2
Business studies & economics	3	English	1
		History	1
		Modern languages	2
		Social sciences	2
		Geography & environmental science	2

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INTRODUCTION

1 The inspection of Worthing Sixth Form College took place in three stages during the autumn and spring terms of the 1993-94 academic year. The college's enrolment and induction procedures were inspected in September 1993, specialist subject areas during the period 17 to 20 January 1994 and aspects of cross-college provision from 14 to 17 February 1994. Eleven inspectors took part in the inspection using 64 inspector days. They visited 83 classes, attended by 957 students, and examined a representative sample of students' work.

2 Discussions were held with members of the college corporation, all senior managers, senior tutors, heads of faculty, heads of department, other teaching staff and students. Inspectors also met employers, parents, representatives of partner schools, the local education authority (LEA), higher education institutions and the careers service. Policy statements and minutes of the major college committees were also examined.

3 The inspection was carried out according to the framework and guidelines described in Council Circular 93/28. The framework describes a four-year inspection cycle. When this cycle becomes fully established, colleges will have the opportunity to respond to the findings of earlier inspection visits before their quadrennial inspection and the subsequent published report. As the inspection of Worthing Sixth Form College occurred early in the cycle, the opportunity for such a response was not available.

THE COLLEGE AND ITS AIMS

4 Worthing Sixth Form College, West Sussex, was fully established by 1977 as part of a reorganised system of comprehensive education in the Worthing area. On 1 April 1993 it became an independent, incorporated college as a result of the Further and Higher Education Act.

5 The college serves the town of Worthing and its neighbouring communities, providing post-16 general education almost exclusively at General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) and General Certificate of Education advanced level (GCE A level). It is planning to widen access to new groups of students and to broaden its provision to include General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) courses and other services of relevance to the local community.

6 The college occupies a single 14 acre site on the western edge of Worthing. It is one mile from the main A27 trunk road and immediately adjacent to a British Rail station, which provides good communication along the coastal strip from Brighton in the east to Chichester in the west.

7 Eighty per cent of students come from the five Worthing 11-16 high schools, the remainder coming from independent schools and other local 11-18 schools. Of the 511 students who entered the college in 1993, 421 were on GCE A level programmes, and 90 were taking GCSEs. There were four part-time students following day-time courses and nine part-time

evening students. The college has grown by 24 per cent since 1989. The college's target for 1993-94, agreed with the FEFC was 948 enrolments, an increase of approximately 8 per cent over the previous year. It achieved an enrolment of 912 as at November 1993, a 4 per cent increase. At the time of the team inspection in February 1994 there were 897 students on roll. Enrolments by age and level of study are given in figures 1 and 2, respectively. The number of students in each of the subject areas is shown in figure 3.

8 The college has 88 full-time equivalent staff, including 67 full-time equivalent teachers and two foreign languages assistants. A staff profile is given in figure 4.

9 On completion of their programmes of study in 1993, 58 per cent of students entered higher education, 7 per cent progressed to GCE advanced level courses at Worthing Sixth Form College, 23 per cent continued in further education at other colleges and 10 per cent found employment.

10 The college's mission is to serve Worthing and neighbouring communities by providing, post-16 general education, with an emphasis on preparation for further and higher education and aiming for academic excellence and high quality pastoral care. The college aims to grow by recruiting a broader range of young people and adults and by widening its curriculum in collaboration with other educational establishments and with the business community.

RESPONSIVENESS AND RANGE OF PROVISION

11 At the time of the inspection, detailed knowledge of National Targets for Education and Training (NTETS) and of the Charter for Further Education was largely restricted to senior management, but staff are showing increasing awareness of national policies for further education. A task group to plan for the introduction of General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQs) has been established.

12 For most of the past decade the relationship between Northbrook College, a general further education college situated nearby, and Worthing Sixth Form College has been based on an informal agreement that Worthing would concentrate on providing general education to full-time students aged 16-19, whereas Northbrook would provide vocational education, together with a limited GCE A level provision for adult and part-time students. Applicants have been referred between the two colleges according to where their best interests were seen to lie. It is at the moment unclear whether this collaborative approach to recruitment will continue, though Worthing Sixth Form College would like it to do so.

13 Current provision consists almost exclusively of GCE A level, AS and GCSE courses. There is a wide range of subjects from which students may choose: some 40 GCE A level, 20 AS and 20 GCSE subjects. Ninety per cent of students are engaged mainly in GCE A level study, supplemented in some cases by AS, GCSE or 'Foreign Languages at Work' courses. The

college has maintained a reputation for high academic standards which continues to attract school leavers.

14 Some 99 per cent of the college's students are in the 16-19 age range. An attempt to introduce evening classes for adults has met with only limited success: one A level English Literature class is running in 1993-94 with 9 students enrolled. Research to identify a broader market for the college's services is at the planning stage. The college should pursue this initiative vigorously if it is to meet its targets for expansion.

15 The students' curriculum is widened and balanced by their participation in the college's accredited course programme. The programme has two parts: a compulsory element which covers information technology, careers and health as well as an introduction to the college's services and facilities; and a negotiated element which allows students to select from over one hundred courses and to participate in work experience, drama productions, choirs, a wind band, a jazz group, a range of team sports, the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, overseas visits and exchanges and various forms of service in the community.

16 The college has an established arrangement for collective worship on a weekly basis. 'Take Ten' is a 10 minute period for staff and students in which both scriptural reading and prayer are shared. This activity is reinforced by 'Crossfire', an association of students and staff, similar to a christian union. The college makes no provision for religious education to meet the requirement of Section 45 of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992. It should address this matter.

17 The college describes itself as open access, but there are entry requirements for the large majority who are full-time students on GCE A and AS level courses. The college should clarify its published statement on access. Of the 511 students entering the college in 1993, 365 (71 per cent) had six or more GCSEs at grade C or above and 432 (85 per cent) had four or more GCSEs at grade C or above. The college recognises that for some of its students, for example those achieving less than two A level passes at grades A-E, the traditional type of A level course has not always been appropriate and that these students might have achieved greater success following other more appropriate provision. GNVQs are planned to start in 1995 in order to meet this need.

18 The college has a policy for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, but little has so far been put into practice. The policy itself is in need of revision in order to establish clear and manageable goals and to harness the commitment of staff. Nevertheless, the college has provided well for the seven students in the current year who have been identified as having learning difficulties. Most of them are experiencing a good quality curriculum and receiving relevant support outside class time. The college should improve formal strategies for the identification of students' learning needs and ensure it receives an adequate flow of information about learning needs and/or disabilities from partner schools.

19 A notable element of the college's practice in liaison and recruitment is the 'High School Partnership'. The title emphasises the collaborative relationship between college and schools which is underpinned by effective consultative procedures. A GCE A level in physical education was introduced recently in response to demand identified through the liaison process.

20 The college attaches great importance to communication with parents, who have a high regard for the quality of its provision and pastoral support. It also has links with voluntary organisations, the area careers office, the West Sussex Advisory Service and higher education institutions such as the West Sussex Institute of Higher Education, Sussex University and the University of Brighton.

21 Work experience placements, especially for business studies students, are well established and involve from 100 to 150 students annually. Placements are generally relevant to students' career goals. Employers pay tribute to the calibre of the students and to the levels of support and preparation provided by the college. Links with employers should be extended so that students are better aware of the demands that will be made on them when they leave education for employment.

22 Since incorporation the college has maintained a close link with the LEA. The principal remains a member of the LEA headteachers' meeting. Liaison with the Sussex Training and Enterprise Council (TEC) is limited, despite the efforts that have been made by the college. There is dialogue and joint activity with the nearby Northbrook College: the two principals have made a joint presentation to the local area head teachers; Northbrook is always invited to participate in the college's careers programme; and students from Worthing Sixth Form College are taking AS level dance at Northbrook.

GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

23 There are 16 members of the corporation including the principal, two staff representatives and two parent governors. Six members, including the chairman, are experienced in business and industry and two, including the vice-chairman, have recently retired from academic life. The college has approached the TEC to secure a representative member but no nomination has been received. There are two student observers.

24 Governors are familiar with the instrument and articles of government and understand the obligations and liabilities placed upon them by incorporation. They would nevertheless welcome further training. Within the membership there is a range of professional skills relevant to the work of the corporation, including personnel, academic and general management, law, insurance and building. This knowledge is appropriately used to support the work of college senior managers. Subcommittees are in place, dealing with finance and general purposes, human resources, remuneration, estates and audit. Governors show an

impressive familiarity with the workings of the college and the issues which face it. They are strongly committed to its future success in the service of their local community.

25 A number of the college's new managerial and administrative tasks are fulfilled on its behalf by West Sussex County Council including payroll, legal services, estates and personnel consultancy, insurance and risk management, management information system software support, catering, and professional advisory services such as inspection, educational psychology and staff training. This last task includes an element of staff role appraisal.

26 Two operating handbooks are now in use. One is a financial regulations and procedures manual which lays down clear and sensible arrangements which are summarised in charts. Some of its provisions should be streamlined; for example, orders, delivery notes and the necessary copies could be more readily processed using self-duplicating pads. The staff handbook which sets out college regulations, including the formal terms of reference and standing orders of the main internal college committees, is incomplete.

27 Senior managers have a meticulous grasp of detail. They and their staff are strongly committed to furthering the work of the college. There is a consensus on the aims of the college which is deliberately nurtured in brief staff meetings held each morning and in longer staff councils held twice a term. Decision making, though often informal, is effective.

28 In those matters where a formal, corporate response is required, the college's current practice is less satisfactory. For example, poor student retention rates in a minority of departments have prompted little management enquiry and no departmental response.

29 The college's management structure is not clear. The senior management forum is the principal's committee which comprises the principal, vice-principal, deputy principal and the manager of finance and administration. The college organisation chart shows the senior management team in a direct line relationship below the principal's committee. It is, nevertheless, described in the staff handbook as being the main decision-making body of the college. The senior management team replaces the former academic board and its current membership consists of the members of the principal's committee, the four senior tutors, the three chairs of faculty, the senior curriculum tutor and the head of accredited courses.

30 Reporting to the senior management team are four divisions and three faculties responsible for pastoral and curriculum matters, respectively. They interact in a matrix structure, with all teaching staff belonging to both a division and a faculty. The faculties, which comprise staff in cognate subject departments, elect their chairs annually. The heads of department are budget holders and have clear line-management responsibility for staff, though some teachers state their loyalty as lying

either with their head of department or the senior tutor of their division, according to personal preference. Although they hold no budgets and have, in practice, limited line-management responsibility, senior tutors are more highly graded than faculty chairs or heads of department. This anomaly should be reviewed.

31 Faculty chairs carry out significant management tasks, which include the administration of in-service education and training budgets, and central participation in the college's strategic planning, its development of GNVQ and its introduction of staff appraisal. They are also members of a new body, the curriculum management team. Although they receive an honorarium, faculty heads have no remission of time to carry out their duties.

32 Academic proposals from the faculties, for example new course initiatives, pass to the senior management team by way of the curriculum management team which appraises their appropriateness and quality and their impact on resources. Although absent from the college organisation chart, the four senior tutors, meeting as a group, are stated in the staff handbook as relating to the senior management team on pastoral matters 'in the same way' as the curriculum management team does on curriculum matters.

33 This complex structure leads some staff to believe that any new course initiative should be considered both within faculties and divisions. They describe the process of course development as lengthy and uncertain in outcome, depending for its success or failure on gathering powerful sponsors during consideration in committee. For this reason, some staff were of the opinion that a course development issue should be more logically referred to the new quality group, which has been set up under the chairmanship of the vice-principal, rather than to the curriculum management team.

34 The college has some 25 committees below the corporation board and its subcommittees. For a small college which has a limited and straightforward curriculum provision, its management structure is over-complicated. Detailed changes initiated by the new principal are alleviating some of the unfortunate characteristics of the structure, but the college should urgently consider its replacement by something simpler. This would also meet the principal's concern that the present structure excessively centralises authority and fulfil his aim of instigating greater delegation and more formal accountability within the college.

35 The college has no equal opportunities policy. Health and safety fall within the terms of the governors' estates subcommittee. Statements made at a meeting of this committee suggested that the legal responsibilities under the Health and Safety at Work Acts are not fully appreciated by its members. Understanding among staff of responsibility for health and safety matters is uneven. The college should address as a matter of urgency the development of effective policies for health and safety, and equal opportunities.

36 The first strategic plan involved staff throughout the college and its preparation was centred in the faculties. It was considered at three meetings of the corporation in order that members should be able to assure themselves that proper consultation had taken place and that it was appropriate in detail. At the time of the inspection, the new strategic plan was being considered equally widely. However, much work remained to be done before it could be seen to represent a clear statement of the college's updated aims, objectives and priorities for the future. Constructive debate within the college would be assisted if the rationale for proposed developments were included in the discussion drafts of the plan.

STUDENTS' RECRUITMENT, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

37 The college is regarded by students in local high schools as the natural destination for those seeking GCE A level courses. Thus, recruitment takes place within a favourable context. The college's four senior tutors carry responsibility for liaison with the five high schools. They are supported in this activity by subject specialists who have the opportunity to talk to potential students early in their final year of study at school and by the provision of informative course leaflets.

38 Further guidance is provided through interviews at the college for students and their parents, a two-day induction programme with taster lessons in June and a further and final interview to confirm course selection in September. Parents and students value the advice offered as well as the flexibility which the college demonstrates in negotiating, where necessary, changes to the programmes originally chosen by students. There were 53 instances of approved subject changes between September 1993 and February 1994.

39 During their time at the college guidance and support for students are exercised through four divisions, each having 13 tutor groups. Each division is led by a senior tutor, who is responsible for the work of staff acting in a pastoral role as group tutors. In all, 52 hours of staff time are spent on the group tutor role each week. Tutors deal with matters related to careers, progression to further and higher education, topics of general interest and other college business. There is a handbook of guidance for tutors which details procedures and suggests approaches to optional activities. Students' experiences vary widely from one tutorial to another. In one case, tutorials consisted of little more than a few general announcements and pieces of information, after which students were free to use the remainder of the hour as they wished. Some students viewed the tutorial as a free period; others revealed scant enthusiasm for this aspect of the pastoral programme. Only when their own career and future needs were being adequately addressed did many students begin to see the tutorial in a more positive light. At present, a good deal of staff tutorial time is poorly used and pastoral support falls more heavily than it should on the shoulders of the four senior tutors. The college should harness the experience of the senior tutors to help to train other staff in student

guidance and support. A research project is currently in progress with the help of an LEA professional adviser to investigate ways of enhancing the effectiveness of tutors.

40 Senior tutors monitor and investigate student absence. Parents are kept informed and support the college's tenacity in pursuing this matter with students.

41 The senior tutors provide careers guidance with good support from the county careers service staff who work with the college. The senior tutors assess GCSE results upon entry, take note of the student's profile or record of achievement, and keep comprehensive written records for all guidance purposes, including careers. The college does not have a student counsellor and senior tutors also carry out the duties normally attaching to such a post, seeking help from specialist agencies when they judge it to be necessary.

42 The students' union is made up of representatives from tutor groups. Each tutor group elects one person to attend students' union meetings and tutor group representatives are subsequently eligible to stand for election to the students' union committee. The outcome of these elections is clearly advertised around the college. Union meetings are held regularly and representatives report back to their tutor group colleagues.

TEACHING AND THE PROMOTION OF LEARNING

43 Most of the work inspected clearly had more strengths than weaknesses. Of the 83 teaching sessions inspected, 66 per cent were graded 1 or 2. The most consistently good practice was found in English, history, mathematics and science. The following table summarises the grades given to the teaching sessions inspected.

Teaching sessions: inspection grades by programme of study

Programmes	Grade	1	2	3	4	5	Totals
GCE A/AS level		15	33	17	3	0	68
GCSE		0	2	6	1	0	9
Other		0	5	1	0	0	6
Total		15	40	24	4	0	83

44 The teaching was well planned. All the departments had well-prepared schemes of work which showed evidence of careful sequencing of topics. A large majority of classes had clearly defined aims and objectives which were successfully communicated to the students. The curriculum offered to the seven students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities was appropriate and was delivered within a caring and supportive framework.

45 Teaching sessions were generally conducted at a lively pace. Teachers had high expectations of their students and sought to stimulate and

challenge them. A variety of learning methods was employed including whole-class teaching, and work in groups and in pairs. There were examples of well-organized question and answer sessions, of the carefully-planned use of teaching aids, and of reinforcement of learning through the use of short tests and handouts. In one environmental studies class there was a particularly good example of the use of video material: students were given a structured set of questions to answer before watching the video; the teacher had prepared material which was used to prompt students about important points in forthcoming sections of the tape; frequent stopping of the tape gave opportunities for discussion of key points and for checking on students' understanding and learning; and the exercise enabled the students to create a well-organised set of notes.

46 There was a good balance of oral and written work. Time for silent reflection and for making notes was also built into lessons. Teachers frequently drew upon students' experiences for illustration of topics under discussion. In modern languages, the almost continuous use of the foreign language during classes helped students' learning. In biology, geography and environmental studies classes, teachers skilfully developed students' general study skills as an integrated part of the learning.

47 In most study areas, assessment was planned so that students clearly understood what was expected of them. Teaching staff showed detailed knowledge of syllabus content and of the requirements placed upon students. The marking of work clearly indicated to students how well they had done. There was some evidence of over-generous marking, for example in art and design essays. Marking of work against declared assessment criteria was generally thorough and helpfully diagnostic. In a GCE A level French class, for example, there was a particularly imaginative method of returning mock examination scripts which involved the students in assessment: grading criteria were distributed and students were required to award a mark to their own work; the students then worked in pairs to examine scripts and discuss the marks awarded and groups of students attempted to moderate the scripts; finally the marks awarded by the tutor were revealed, differences identified and discussed. Conversations with students after this session confirmed that they had gained a clearer understanding of the standards required by the examination board, were more aware of their own strengths and weaknesses and clearer about the remedial action each needed to take. The tutor used the foreign language throughout the session and the students did so for most of the time. In another example of self assessment, sociology lecturers had designed a proforma to enable students to review their mock examination answers. It was used to encourage students to cast a critical eye over their own work and to identify matters needing particular attention.

48 Some of the students' written work had been carefully annotated with helpful comments by the teacher though other work had no comments at all. Not all marking paid sufficient attention to grammar, spelling and

style. The college should ensure that these aspects of work are addressed consistently.

49 There were formal reviews of student progress using good, standard student review forms. Positive examples were seen in the sciences and in art and design. In the latter case, the reviews included a detailed written action plan which identified clearly the steps a student needed to take in order to succeed in a forthcoming examination. Action plans for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, however, lacked specific targets and were less useful to them.

50 In a small number of classes, the range of teaching methods employed was restricted and the quality of the students' experience reduced by pedestrian teaching, by over-formal styles of delivery which failed to hold the attention of all the members of a group, or by the choice of materials which made few demands on the students. In a few sessions teachers used examples to illustrate points which failed to take account of students' experiences or which were seen by students as irrelevant. Opportunity was not always taken to arrange classroom furniture to suit the activities being pursued in the lesson. Occasionally, group work resulted in idle moments for the more able: no action was taken by the lecturer to provide supplementary work for those who had completed their tasks. Whilst much learning and assessment activity was legitimately focused on forthcoming examinations, some lecturers were prone to imply that these were the only valuable outcome of students' studies or the only acceptable authority for teaching subjects in a particular way. In the social sciences, a good balance was struck between preparing for examinations and other aspects of learning.

51 Learning was enhanced by the relations between staff and students which were relaxed, friendly and mutually supportive. Learning was generally seen as a collaborative process. In most classes, a positive ambience was created in which students were responsive and keen to learn. In the best classes, there was a palpable sense of intellectual excitement.

STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENTS

52 The majority of students enjoy their work and consider that the college and their course meet their expectations. Students display a good attitude to study and are able to discuss their work with enthusiasm. There is a willingness on the part of the students to ask for help when needed and they have a positive, questioning approach to new work.

53 Students' written work is generally of a good standard and some is outstanding. Students' oral communication skills are well developed through discussion and group work. However, group work is less well used to develop students' abilities as members of a team. The approach to the development of study skills varies across the college and in most cases, support and guidance are only provided as a reaction to the poor performance of individual students. There should be a more consistent

approach to developing students' skills at the commencement of their courses. In programmes of study where it is applicable, the development of practical skills is good. Practical work is carried out safely and competently.

54 The college results for GCE A, AS and GCSE examinations are, in most cases, well above the national average. At GCE A level, an overall pass rate of 92 per cent was achieved in 1993, compared with an average of 80 per cent for all sixth form colleges. All students passed in applied mathematics, business studies, chemistry, German, graphical communication, history, music, pure mathematics and religious studies. High pass rates were also achieved in ancient history (95 per cent), art and design (95 per cent), English literature (98 per cent), French (94 per cent), geology (95 per cent), media studies (96 per cent), physics (97 per cent), sociology (97 per cent) and theatre studies (96 per cent). According to the Advanced Level Information System (ALIS) reports for 1993, the college assisted its students to achieve better grades than were predicted on the basis of their GCSE results in 18 out of 24 subjects. The AS level results are consistently good with an overall pass rate for 1993 of 90 per cent, compared with an average of 72 per cent for all sixth form colleges. In 10 of the 19 course groups, all the students passed.

55 In 1993, the 339 students aged 16-18, entered for two or more A levels (or AS equivalents) achieved a points score of 16.3 (where A=10, E=2). This compares with an average of 14.7 for all schools and colleges, and places the college among the top 20 institutions within the further education sector.

56 GCSE results are more variable. Students are either resitting examinations or undertaking a GCSE syllabus for the first time in just one academic year. For 1992 and 1993, pass rates in excess of 90 per cent at grade C or above were achieved in English literature and sociology. Less than 70 per cent pass rates were achieved in both 1992 and 1993 for American studies, chemistry, geography, law and mathematics. The average percentage of students achieving grades A-C across all subjects was 72 per cent in 1992 and 78 per cent in 1993. This is well above the national average for sixth form colleges, which was 50 per cent in 1993.

57 In addition to GCSE and GCE A level and AS programmes, the college also offers to all students a City and Guilds of London Institute information technology scheme. In 1993, of the 89 students who took word processing as part of the 'information technology across the curriculum' programme, 74 (83 per cent) achieved a pass. Of the 25 students who took the full certificate, all passed.

58 'Foreign Language at Work' is another option which is available to all students. In 1992-93, the only language on offer was French and all the 12 students who entered gained a certificate. In 1993-94, the programme has been extended to include German, Spanish and Italian and 31 students are participating.

59 Retention rates in the college in 1993 were 82 per cent for GCE A

level courses, 83 per cent for AS courses and 94 per cent for GCSE courses. However, there are high drop-out rates in a small number of GCE A level subjects, notably art and design and German. More attention should be paid to pre-entry guidance and induction for these courses. A greater use of subject specialists in recruiting students to courses should help to avoid the need for changes of subject or abandonment of courses by students.

60 In both 1992 and 1993, 72 per cent of the college's students completing their GCE A level programmes went on to higher education. Seventeen per cent went on to further education and 8 per cent went directly into employment. The college celebrates the achievements of its students with an annual presentation evening.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

61 There is no college policy on quality and its assurance. The new principal has established a quality assurance group which has among its key objectives the development of course team reviews and the instigation of a formal evaluation of examination results, enrolment numbers, retention rates and destinations. The college's plans also include the systematic collection and correlation of students' views. There are no proposals to incorporate employer or community comment, a matter which the college should reconsider.

62 Current approaches to quality assurance are informal and largely unstructured, apart from the annual review of examination results. These informal procedures are not centrally directed and rely on the enthusiasm of individual departments. In most departments, students' progress is monitored through the normal programme of assignments, coursework and examinations, reinforced by a personal profiling system. The information derived from this monitoring process concentrates on individual performance and produces little hard data for course review.

63 In some departments, questionnaires, interviews and group discussions are used to discover students' perceptions of courses. Practice varies widely. Only in the biology department is there a comprehensive system of review, although examples of good practice are developing in geography, modern languages, history, business studies and the social sciences. There is no system to ensure that the extent and effectiveness of these individual activities are known to college managers. No targets or standards are set against which to monitor progress. The college states its intention to address these deficiencies.

64 Examination results are reviewed annually and the college contributes to the ALIS system under which the GCSE point scores of a student at entry are compared with the points achieved by the same student at A level. By comparing the achievement of a cohort of students with the national picture provided by ALIS, it is possible to establish a value-added indicator. At present the work with ALIS is at an early stage of development.

65 The West Sussex Advisory Service has a contract with the college to provide inspection and consultancy advice. Prior to incorporation, inspection took place in curriculum areas selected by county advisers. Since incorporation it has been initiated by the college. A recent assessment of provision in music resulted in a strategy for improvement which included clear objectives. It has also produced an improvement in liaison with schools as well as in the quality of students' learning experience within this subject.

66 The college has adopted the West Sussex staff appraisal scheme for schools and colleges and this is currently being introduced for both teaching and support staff. The scheme is comprehensive and thorough, but there are difficulties in focusing it through the college's present management structure. To date, the vice-principal and deputy principal have been appraised and the four senior tutors are currently going through the process. Some in-service training is taking place to raise awareness for the remainder of the college staff. Most teaching staff are confident about the scheme, although some support staff report that they remain confused. Training is being organised for future appraisers. The potential link between appraisal and staff development has not been fully explored. This is a weakness that should be addressed.

67 There is a college policy statement on staff development which describes its general aims and the responsibilities of individual staff and of the staff development consultative committee. However, there is no associated operating plan and no obvious way in which an analysis of need may be created. The aims for staff development are not formally linked to the college's objectives through the strategic plan. There is no annual review of staff development activity and consequently no evaluation of progress.

68 The budget for staff development is estimated on historical criteria and split between subject updating and other college requirements. The subject component is devolved to chairs of faculties but expenditure is not monitored against any agreed set of criteria. The college component, which provides for both teaching and support staff, is administered by the deputy principal. This fund covers a wide range of activities including management training, curriculum support activities and wider curriculum issues such as the introduction of GNVQ. Requests from individuals for staff development, particularly for subject updating, are made to heads of department. Staff report no difficulty in obtaining training and the current budget appears to be adequate to meet their expectations. This may change as the appraisal scheme is implemented and in the light of better articulation of the college's requirements from its staff.

69 A beneficial induction programme is organised for new staff. The process could be made more rigorous if mentors were formally assigned and a progress review carried out at intervals during the first year.

70 The college has recently put the Charter for Further Education on the

agenda for discussion by governors. The newly-formed quality assurance group has considered it briefly. The college plans to involve both students and staff in the development of its own charter, which must be in place by the end of the current academic year.

RESOURCES

Staffing

71 The staff: student ratio is 1:13.4. Part-time teaching staff cover 6.6 per cent of the total class contact hours. This low figure may limit the college's flexibility in planning curricular developments. The gender mix of teaching staff is 54 per cent male and 46 per cent female; all the senior tutors are female and all the chairs of faculty male.

72 Teachers are appropriately qualified for the teaching they do. Seventy-eight per cent possess a teacher training qualification. For a quarter of the teaching staff, Worthing Sixth Form College is their first teaching appointment. This figure includes both new entrants to teaching and those who have given up to 21 years of service. The average length of service for a teacher at the college is 10.3 years. All full-time staff have undertaken staff-development activities within their specialism during the past three years, which is a commendable record.

73 The college has 21 academic departments. They range in size from a single person in the cases of graphical communications and religious studies to English, which has 11 staff. Class contact time for teachers is generally 21 hours per week. Heads of department have remission of contact time to reflect the level of administration and guidance undertaken.

74 Management of non-teaching staff has recently been redefined. The vice-principal is now responsible for academic support staff and the manager of finance and administration responsible for all non-academic support staff. Job descriptions have been revised to reflect these changes. Levels of support staff are adequate in most areas but effective use of the new language laboratory and its associated technology will be made only if appropriate technician support becomes available.

75 Library staffing consists of a teacher with special responsibility for the library, supported by two part-time assistants. With the growing demands of student-centred learning, which involves students working on their own using library resources, this level of staffing is minimal and the appointment of a professional librarian is desirable.

Equipment/learning resources

76 Worthing Sixth Form College's unit of funding for 1992-93 was recorded in the FEFC report, *Funding Allocations 1993-94*, as £2,550 per weighted full-time student. The median for sixth form colleges was £2,647. Summaries of the college's estimated income and expenditure for 1993-94 are given in figures 5 and 6. The college budget consists of 10 cost centres which are sub-divided into 83 delegated budgets and controlled through a

computer-based accounting system. Monthly statements of the balance and commitments against each heading are passed to budget holders. Twenty-one of the 83 delegated budgets are held by academic departments. Money for class materials and activities is allocated to each of them on the basis of a formula which weights GCE A level work to GCSE work in a ratio of 3:1, and which recognises the costs of different subjects. The allocation per student across all subject areas ranged from £59.15 for graphics to £14.86 for English. Monies are allocated on a target enrolment basis. An initial allocation for the whole college of £59,500 was made in April 1993. A reserve fund of £14,000 was held back until actual enrolment numbers were known for September 1993 and then a further adjusted distribution was agreed. Staff are content with this system. The budget for each department ranges between £576 and £8,420. Budget holders in areas using common items sometimes pool their funding to purchase major items of equipment. Whilst this is clearly a sensible practice, it is also a reflection of the small sums allocated to some of the 21 departments. The college should review its practice in this area to see whether or not delegation to fewer budget holders would better secure its purposes.

77 Computers are readily accessible to students, though arrangements are not always satisfactory since students sometimes use them in rooms in which classes are being taught. The student to workstation ratio is 1:16, which is high. The facility consists of 28 workstations on a 386 network in the computing centre and 27 workstations in other parts of the college on a 186 network. No formal college policy exists for replacement of this, or other, equipment.

78 The library bookstock of 12,700 titles is inadequate for the number of students in the college. Some academic departments maintain their own class texts as an additional resource. Use of the book stock is not monitored but there are plans to introduce a computerised system for this purpose. The careers library is adequately resourced.

Accommodation

79 The allocation of teaching rooms is the responsibility of the vice-principal. Cognate subjects are concentrated around specialist facilities. Apart from Wednesday afternoon, the accommodation is heavily used between 08.40 and 15.15 hours, Monday to Friday, but use outside these times is minimal. Income from lettings between September and December was £3,764. The estate is the responsibility of the manager of finance and administration. A database for utilisation, occupancy and maintenance is being developed.

80 Several improvements have been completed recently, including the conversion of the hall and stage to a library with supporting offices, and the indoor gymnasium to a drama studio. At the time of the inspection, a programme to adapt two classrooms for use as a language laboratory was about to commence.

81 The quality of the teaching accommodation is good but there is a shortage of teaching rooms to house the larger subject groups. Accommodation is generally well furnished, well decorated and well maintained. Although some of the areas in which students work are cramped, the college generally provides a good working environment. Access for students with restricted mobility is confined to the ground floor rooms of the main building and to the prefabricated classrooms of the social sciences block. This is an issue to be addressed in the context of the college's stated intention to improve its service to students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

82 The existing refectory is too small to serve the student population. Staggered lunch-breaks have alleviated the pressure, but the need remains for more student social and recreational space.

83 The accommodation for staff is adequate. There is a central staffroom, and study offices for all full-time staff are clustered around their teaching locations. There is little space for storing teaching materials and equipment. The chemistry preparation room is cramped and poorly organised, with storage impinging on work space to the extent that its use is made difficult and potentially hazardous. The existence of three separate preparation rooms for biology, chemistry and physics creates some duplication of resources and effort.

84 The college site includes approximately eight acres of playing fields mainly used by students on one afternoon a week in term time. They are also used to some extent by local community groups at weekends. The college is negotiating for sponsorship to floodlight the netball courts to extend their utilisation. The intensity of use of the college's land assets is, however, very low and the various options for harnessing this resource should be considered.

85 The establishment of the new library has doubled the available space but it can only accommodate 72 students, some 8 per cent of the student body, at any one time. This is a low figure. On the other hand, the library was not observed to be full at any time during the inspection.

CONCLUSIONS AND ISSUES

86 Worthing Sixth Form College is making progress towards achieving its mission. The particular strengths of the college are:

- the good quality of the teaching
- the high level of achievement of its students
- the professional commitment of teaching and support staff
- well-motivated students
- effective liaison with partner schools
- the strength of support from the local community.

87 If it is to succeed in achieving its aims, the college should address the following issues:

- weaknesses in management and academic structures
- the lack of effective systems for quality assurance
- the absence of policies in key areas
- the need to refine plans for development.

FIGURES

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- 1 Percentage enrolments by age (at February 1994)

 - 2 Percentage enrolments by level of study (at February 1994)

 - 3 Number of students in each subject area (1993-94)

 - 4 Staff profile – staff expressed as full-time equivalents (1993-94)

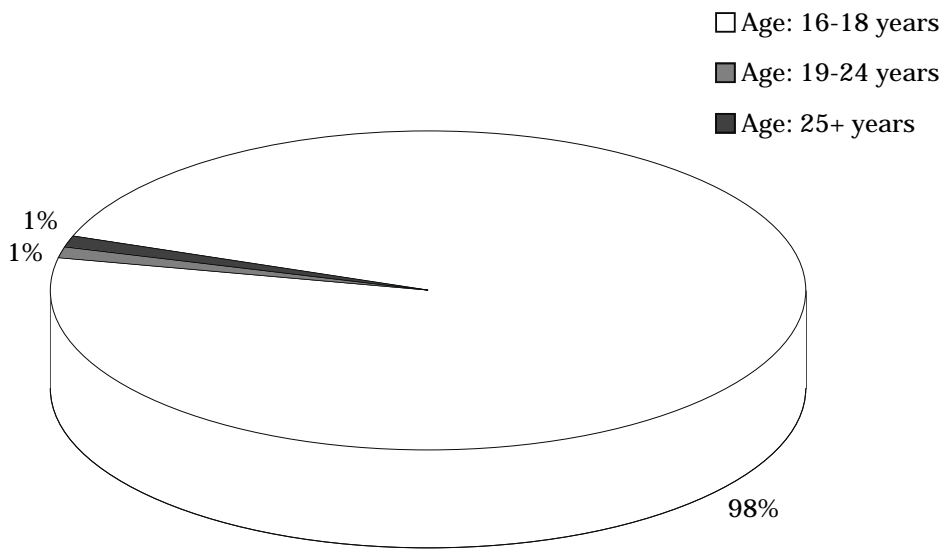
 - 5 Recurrent income (for 16 months to July 1994)

 - 6 Estimated 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

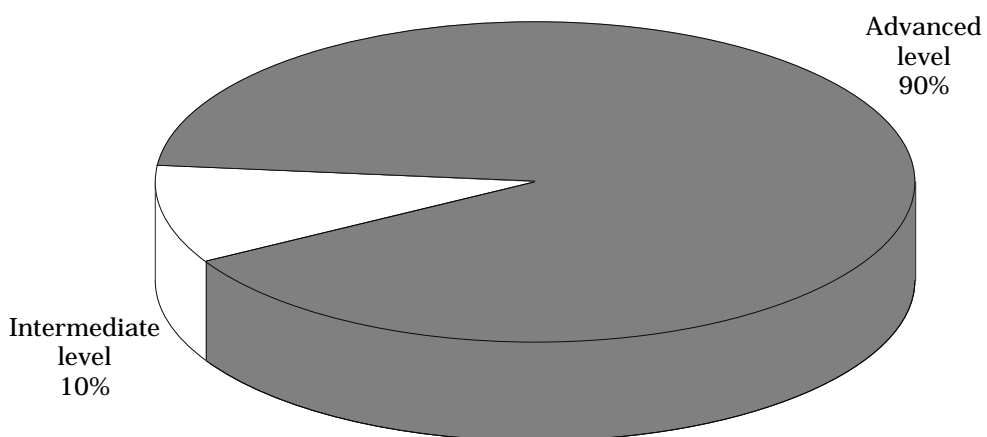
Worthing Sixth Form College: percentage enrolments by age (at February 1994)



Enrolments: 897

Figure 2

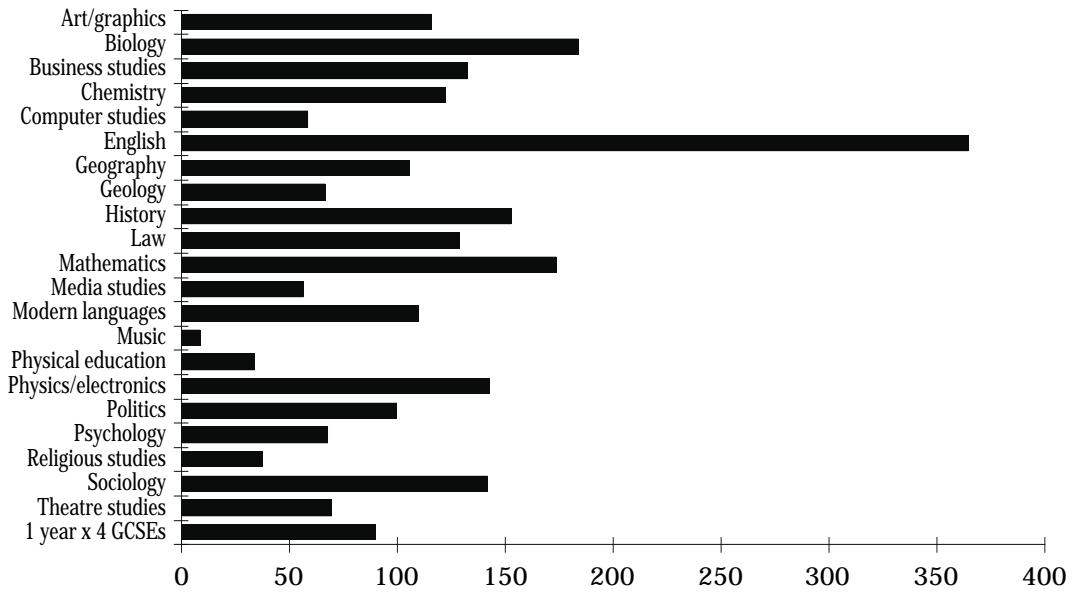
Worthing Sixth Form College: percentage enrolments by level of study (at February 1994)



Enrolments: 897

Figure 3

Worthing Sixth Form College: numbers of students in each subject area (1993-94)

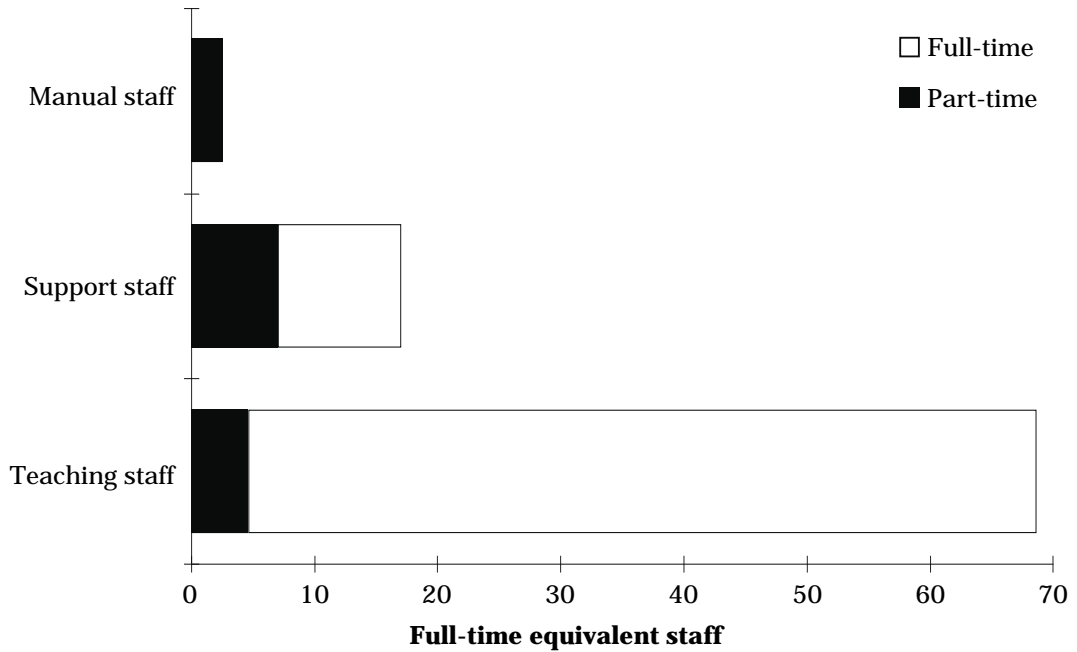


Note: the majority of students appear in more than one curriculum area.

Number of full-time students: 899

Figure 4

Worthing Sixth Form College: staff profile – staff expressed as full-time equivalents (1993-94)



Full-time equivalent staff: 88

Figure 5

Worthing Sixth Form College: recurrent income (for 16 months to July 1994)

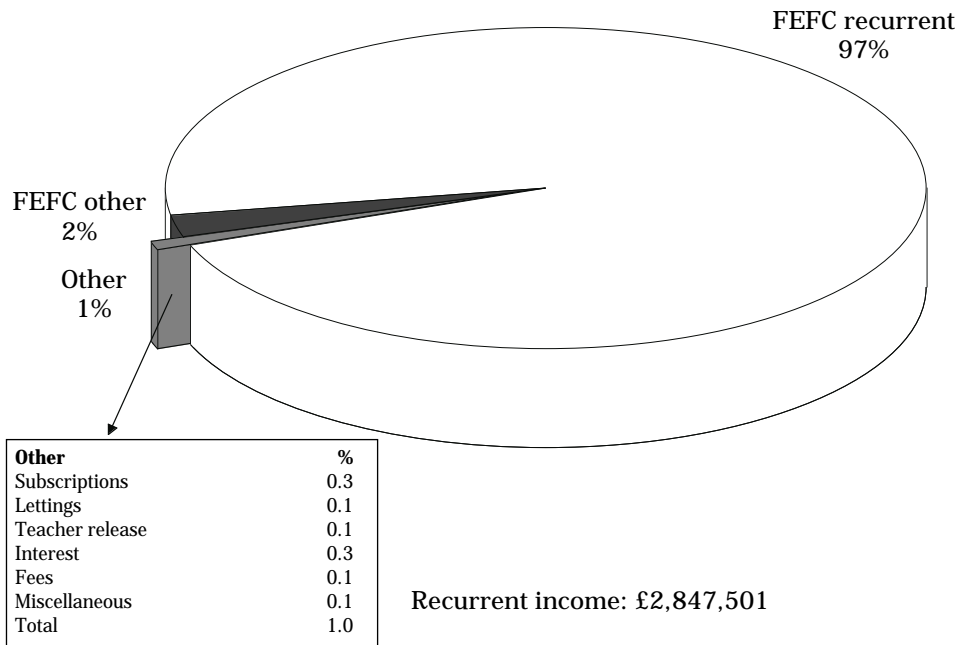
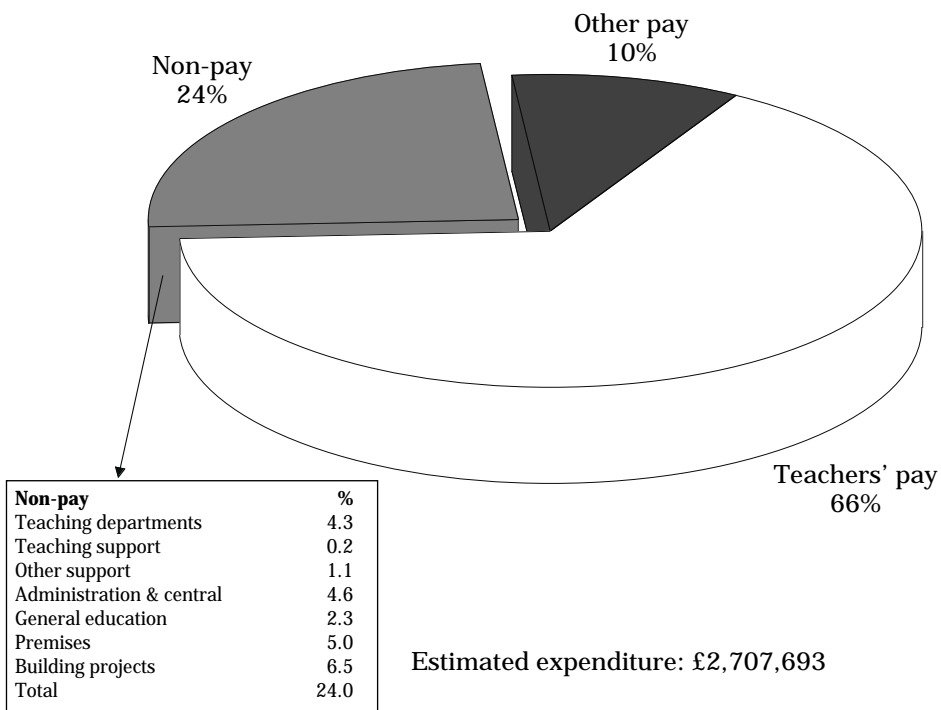


Figure 6

Worthing Sixth Form College: estimated expenditure (for 16 months to July 1994)



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