

**REPORT  
FROM THE  
INSPECTORATE**

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# **Wyke Sixth Form College**

**May 1997**

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**THE  
FURTHER  
EDUCATION  
FUNDING  
COUNCIL**

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FUNDING COUNCIL**

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

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

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## **GRADE DESCRIPTORS**

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

*The descriptors for the grades are:*

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

*By June 1996, some 329 college inspections had been completed. The grade profiles for aspects of cross-college provision and programme areas for the 329 colleges are shown in the following table.*

### **College grade profiles 1993-96**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Inspection grades</b>				
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Programme area	9%	59%	29%	3%	<1%
Cross-college provision	14%	50%	31%	5%	<1%
Overall	12%	54%	30%	4%	<1%

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# FEFC INSPECTION REPORT 59/97

**WYKE SIXTH FORM COLLEGE**  
**YORKSHIRE AND HUMBERSIDE REGION**  
**Inspected September 1996-February 1997**

## Summary

Wyke Sixth Form College is a medium-sized college offering an extensive range of programmes and enrichment activities, mainly for full-time students aged 16 to 19. It has strong links with external agencies and with Europe. Governors are supportive and take an active interest in the academic standards of the college. Senior staff provide effective leadership. There is a well-developed tutorial system and students receive good support from their personal tutors and teachers. Careers advice and guidance are of a high standard. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good and standards of achievement are high in many subjects. Quality assurance procedures have been planned carefully and action is taken to address the issues identified in reviews. Staff are well qualified. Classrooms are equipped to a good standard and accommodation is of high quality. The college should: further develop its links with schools, business and industry; improve aspects of the strategic planning process; ensure that the management of departments and faculties is of a consistently high standard; increase the levels of specialist learning support; and ensure quality assurance procedures are implemented consistently.

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

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

<b>Curriculum area</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Curriculum area</b>	<b>Grade</b>
Mathematics and computing	2	Humanities including modern	
Sciences	2	foreign languages	2
Business	3	English	3
Creative and performing arts	1	Social sciences	2

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## **INTRODUCTION**

1 Wyke Sixth Form College, Kingston upon Hull, was inspected between September 1996 and February 1997. The college's enrolment and induction procedures were inspected in early September 1996. In February 1997, a team of five inspectors spent 25 days inspecting aspects of cross-college provision. Prior to this, 28 days were used for the inspection of curriculum areas. Inspectors visited 124 classes, examined students' written work and held discussions with college governors, senior managers, staff and students, parents, head teachers of local schools, and representatives from the local authority, universities, businesses, Humberside Training and Enterprise Council (TEC) and Humberside Careers and Guidance Services.

## **THE COLLEGE AND ITS AIMS**

2 Wyke Sixth Form College serves the western part of the city of Kingston upon Hull and its surrounding area. It was established in 1988 as part of the reorganisation of the city's schools. It is one of two sixth form colleges in Kingston upon Hull, intended to be the main providers of full-time general certificate of education advanced level (GCE A level) courses for the 16 to 19 age group. Hull College, a large general further education college, was to provide adult and vocational courses. The city's schools, in the main, take pupils aged from 11 to 16. There are five 11 to 18 schools in the outer suburbs which have sixth forms. Wyke recruits primarily from seven 11 to 16 partner schools in West Hull. The college is an associate college of the universities of Hull and of Lincolnshire and Humberside, both of which are located approximately one mile from the college.

3 The population of Hull is approximately 268,000. The city is marked by serious economic and social deprivation, in comparison with the rest of the region and with the country as a whole. The level of unemployment in the city in September 1996 was 12.5 per cent, considerably higher than the national average of 7.4 per cent. High unemployment, particularly in the central wards, dates from the decline of the fishing industry in the early 1970s. The city has few high technology industries and a significant proportion of small and medium-sized enterprises. Only 50 per cent of Hull's 16 year olds continue in full-time education, considerably below the national average. In 1996, only 22.6 per cent of year 11 pupils in the city schools achieved five or more general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) at grades A to C, according to tables published by the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE). This is well below the national average of 44.5 per cent.

4 It is a major objective of the college to improve the participation rate and increase the educational opportunities available to young people. In the first four years of its operation, at a time when the numbers of leavers from the partner schools declined by 17 per cent, the number of students

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in the college increased by 60 per cent. Since then, growth has been less rapid. The college recruits about 24 per cent of those who leave from the partner schools each year. It also attracts a significant number of students from other schools, and an increasing number of adults to both daytime and evening classes. In November 1996, there were 1,466 enrolments, of which 1,029 were full time. Most students were following GCE A level or advanced general national vocational qualification (GNVQ) courses. Student numbers by age, by level of study, and by mode of attendance and curriculum area are shown in figures 1, 2 and 3.

5 There are 67 full-time equivalent teaching staff at the college and 31 full-time equivalent support staff. A staff profile, with staff expressed as full-time equivalents, is shown in figure 4. The senior management team comprises the principal and five vice-principals who are responsible for curriculum development and courses; student recruitment; student and staff support; resources and finance; and organisation and communication, respectively. Teaching staff are grouped into the faculties of business, humanities, science, core studies and arts.

6 The college's aims, arising from its mission statement, are: to provide extensive educational opportunities; to ensure quality within a centre of excellence; to provide a supportive and caring environment; to develop a European and international framework; to be entrepreneurial and innovative in encouraging more people to pursue further education; and to work with the business community and local providers of higher education.

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

7 The college offers an extensive and well-established range of more than 35 subjects at GCE A level and 30 GCSE subjects. Fifteen GCE advanced supplementary (AS) subjects are offered. The range includes some subjects not usually offered, such as archaeology, classical civilization, philosophy, science technology and society, and astronomy. Enrolments have increased in some GCE A level subjects where national trends have shown a decrease, for example, mathematics. The range has been updated with the introduction of new subjects, new syllabuses, and modular schemes that offer students more choice of options.

8 Since incorporation the college has steadily and successfully broadened its traditional range of courses. Some 174 students are now studying GNVQs in business, performing arts, health and social care, leisure and tourism and information technology, mainly at intermediate or advanced levels. A few students study a GCE A level subject alongside a GNVQ. There is strong recruitment to a Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) foundation course in art at post-GCE A level, and a BTEC national diploma in performing arts, the latter offering students a vocational alternative to the GCE A level in theatre studies. An evening programme comprising mainly GCSE and GCE A level subjects was

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introduced last year and enrolled over 200 students, well above the initial recruitment target. Some aspects of this newer provision require consolidation. For example, recruitment to some GNVQ courses is low, there is no pre-foundation programme for students with learning difficulties and, for some occupational areas, vocationally relevant learning materials and links with external agencies have not been developed fully.

9 The college's mission statement and strategic aims are broad. The college has made a good start in extending its curriculum, but some aspects of provision need further development if the college is to meet fully its stated aims. There are currently no access programmes to prepare adults for entry into higher education; few adults enrol for daytime programmes; there are few foundation level courses, and the college has not yet clarified its policy on providing these in the context of the existing provision in Hull.

10 The college has established effective links with further and higher education providers in the region. It is an active member of a consortium of Yorkshire and Humberside sixth form colleges. It runs, as a franchise, the foundation year of a science degree course of the University of Hull. Students enrolling on this course study at Wyke for the first year and then progress to the university to complete their degree. Enrolments on this course have increased steadily from 17 in the pilot year to 52 in the current year. Some of these students enrol for additional college programmes such as GCE AS and GCSE courses. At the time of the inspection, a member of staff was seconded to the University of Humberside to undertake a research project designed to improve progression from schools to further and higher education in the region.

11 There are many opportunities for students to enrich their experience at college. Almost all students participate in the enrichment programme, which includes information technology skills, sport, foreign languages, drama and general interest options. Each year about 200 students enter the examination for GCE A level general studies, some 50 students are taught to play musical instruments and approximately 250 participate in well-organised work experience programmes in local organisations. There is a Christian union, and prayer facilities are available for students of other faiths.

12 The college has developed a wide range of links with the community it serves. For example, students interested in teaching as a career can undertake placements in local schools and those interested in journalism can use facilities provided by the local press to produce the college newspaper, 'Word on Wyke', which is distributed to some 40,000 households twice a year. College facilities are used by a variety of community organisations. There are regular opportunities for parents to discuss matters with tutors. There are well-established links with partner schools. A wide range of open events is organised and the college runs a mathematics competition for the West Hull schools. However, curriculum links between subject departments and schools are not extensive and the college is currently undertaking a project to improve these links.



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13 The college has a good working relationship with Humberside TEC. The principal is a member of the TEC council and the board of the Education Business Partnership. On entry to college many students continue their involvement in the Education Business Partnership Compact scheme, which aims to improve attendance, punctuality and achievement. TEC funding has supported the development of the college's GNVQ programmes and the 'Try it Out' scheme whereby students are introduced to modern apprenticeships through links with local companies.

14 One of the college's aims is to establish 'a full partnership' with business. It has gone some way towards achieving this. A full partnership with one company has resulted in placements for staff and students, opportunities for company staff to update their skills, sponsorship awards and the opportunity for art and design students to carry out 'live' design briefs. Other links are at an early stage of development. There is scope to co-ordinate and exploit more fully the opportunities available and to involve businesses in developing the curriculum.

15 The strong European dimension to college activities reflects the college's strategic commitment to this aspect of provision. The college has gained a European curriculum award and offers its own certificates to students for their involvement in European and international initiatives. Grants from European funds are used to provide an extensive programme of student and staff exchanges, overseas field studies, music and drama tours, and work experience for foreign students coming to Hull and for Wyke students going abroad. This year about 200 students and staff from the college will be involved in this range of activities. There is an annual European week and help is given to partner schools to mount European events. Many students on GNVQ courses take modern language options.

16 The college has responded to the needs of groups who do not usually enter further education. There is a small number of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities studying a range of programmes in the college. College figures indicate that 4 per cent of enrolments are from minority ethnic groups. This indicates that the college is successful in recruiting students from these groups which represent only 1 per cent of the total population in Hull and the surrounding districts. There is a small group of overseas students and the college aims to recruit more. The college runs a daytime class and an evening class in English for speakers of other languages (ESOL).

17 The college makes good use of its external links to promote courses and has an effective marketing strategy for its present provision. The strategy is informed by a thorough analysis of recruitment patterns. This shows that many students travel out of the local area for secondary school education but return to Wyke Sixth Form College at the age of 16. There is a good range of well-designed publicity materials.

18 The college has an equal opportunities policy and an equal opportunities working group which meets regularly. The policy is

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reinforced by a comprehensive implementation document. Students' awareness of the equal opportunities policy is raised during the induction process. Some departments are successful in integrating the study of equal opportunities issues into the curriculum. Minutes of the working group indicate a need to monitor more effectively the implementation of the policy.

### **GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT**

19 The corporation of the college has 14 members, of whom four are women. Its membership includes the principal, two members of staff and a representative from the TEC. Governors bring a range of relevant experience to the board. The students' association is invited to send two observers to corporation meetings. There is one vacancy for an independent member. There are committees for audit; finance and general purposes; remuneration; and personnel. The finance and general purposes committee meets monthly and has demonstrated considerable financial acumen in overseeing college finances and monitoring academic issues. All the committees have clear terms of reference and all governors belong to at least one committee. The corporation holds three meetings a year. There is a register of interests and a code of conduct which has been signed by all governors. The staff governors attend the finance and general purposes and personnel committees as observers. The last two meetings of the personnel committee have been inquorate. No corporation member has a qualification in accountancy or law.

20 The college provides an information pack for new governors. Training events for governors, held immediately prior to corporation meetings, are well attended. The principal presents a report at each corporation meeting, and these reports have enabled members to develop a good understanding of academic issues. The corporation has approved a range of policies, including equal opportunities, health and safety, and personnel matters, but has not yet established procedures for their review and evaluation. The corporation does not receive annual reports on equal opportunities, the college charter or students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Consequently, it is not able to assure itself that it is meeting its responsibilities in these areas. The corporation has yet to establish criteria by which to assess its own performance.

21 Teaching and support staff were involved in the strategic planning process through their attendance at staff meetings which considered the college's strategic options over the next three years. The governors are not involved at an early stage in the strategic planning process. The college does not have an annual operating plan to accompany the strategic plan. Subject departments are asked to produce an annual development plan; these vary as to the dates of their preparation and their format. Some do not relate to the objectives within the strategic plan. There are examples of good practice in media and film studies and biology, where the plans address matters such as courses, students, resources, school links, and

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funding. In some departments, plans are not well structured, objectives are not clearly defined and responsibilities are not specified.

22 A new management structure was introduced in September 1996 with the purpose of simplifying the management of the college and reducing the ratio of payroll costs to income. The senior management team meets twice weekly and is the major decision-making body in the college. The curriculum is delivered and managed by the heads of faculty and 27 subject leaders. The college management team, the college's main policy-making group, meets weekly. It comprises the principal, vice-principals, heads of faculty and other senior staff with cross-college responsibilities. The curriculum management group, comprising those members of the college management team with curriculum responsibilities, also meets weekly. The new structure has reduced staff costs by approximately 8 per cent. Organisational charts and job descriptions define responsibilities, lines of management and accountability. Communication across the college is good. The principal holds a weekly briefing for all staff, there is a staff newsletter and important information is displayed in the staff room.

23 The senior management team and college management team provide strong leadership. The curriculum management group maintains a strategic perspective of the curriculum, and has been effective in the management of curriculum initiatives. Some faculties are managed more effectively than others. Some departments work well together whilst in others, communication is poor. There is no calendar of subject team meetings, with the result that some teams meet with insufficient frequency. Academic management in some subject teams is hindered by the inability of part-time teachers to attend meetings. However, as a result of recent changes, academic leadership is becoming more effective. Heads of faculty and departments are now focusing on the development and sharing of good teaching practice.

24 Management information is available to subject leaders, tutors, senior tutors and teachers. For example, tutors and senior tutors receive daily and weekly information on the attendance of individual students. Regular reports monitoring the college's budget are presented to the finance and general purposes committee. The senior management team receives monthly income and expenditure accounts, information on student numbers, and data relating to retention and the number of applications received from students wishing to study at the college. Teaching staff feel that the information presented to them is reliable and accurate. However, the college recognises that the information provided for teaching staff, academic and senior managers is not sufficiently comprehensive, and a management information development plan has been devised to improve the service.

25 The college receives over 90 per cent of its income from the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC). Governors, managers and staff are aware that the college is working within an increasingly demanding financial context. The college's average level of funding in 1996-97 is

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£20.63 per unit. The median for sixth form colleges for the same period is £19.36 per unit. The college's income and expenditure for the 12 months to July 1996 are shown in figures 5 and 6. There is effective delegation of the college's budget, involving 40 budget holders. An annual budgetary planning process monitors bids in relation to strategic objectives and estimated income. Figures provided by the college indicate a reduction in non-pay costs of 15 per cent over the last two years. One of the college's strategic objectives is to produce information about the costs of its provision. This information is now available for part-time provision but has not yet been produced for full-time programmes.

26 Figures provided by the college indicate that it will meet its enrolment target for 1996-97. Course enrolment targets are set by the college but some subject leaders are unaware of the enrolment targets for their courses. The senior management team monitors applications regularly and compares them with applications received at the same time during the previous year. Data on student retention and reasons for absence or leaving a course early are monitored weekly by managers.

27 Destination data are collected by senior tutors and tutors by means of an end-of-course questionnaire. Students who fail to reply are contacted by telephone and letter. Destination information was obtained for 92 per cent of the students who left at the end of the academic year 1995-96. A report on students' destinations is presented to the corporation in the autumn term. The college also monitors the final destinations of students on completion of their higher education courses. Information about students' destinations is used positively within college publicity materials and to inform current students about higher education and employment options.

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

28 Pastoral support for students has a high priority in the college. It is central to the college's ethos of providing a supportive and caring environment in which students are helped to achieve to the best of their ability. Students value the support they receive from their personal tutors and the willingness of their teachers to provide additional help. Staff take great pride in their tutorial roles and work hard to support students, many of whom come from disadvantaged backgrounds.

29 Liaison tutors have developed strong links with the college's partner schools. The tutors visit the schools regularly to provide information for staff and students about the college's programmes. Prospective students are invited to visit the college to find out about the courses offered. They find the visits helpful but feel that they do not give them sufficient understanding of the demands made by some courses. Attractive publicity materials provide detailed information about the college's courses and facilities. Students who decide they would like to apply for a course at the college have the opportunity to be interviewed either at school or at college. Students are asked to bring their national records of achievement to the

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interviews, and staff are encouraged to use them to develop their understanding of the students' abilities and interests. Once students have made an application to the college, care is taken to maintain contact with them through letters wishing them well in their examinations and additional opportunities to visit the college in July to discuss their proposed courses. During this visit students are introduced to the member of staff who will be their personal tutor. This practice is valued by students who feel that it helps to reduce their anxieties about the transition from school to college.

30 Enrolment procedures are managed effectively. Students comment that staff are welcoming and put them at their ease. A well-planned induction programme helps students to settle in quickly to college life. Induction to subjects is managed more effectively in some departments than others. Some students feel that they are not given enough support in adjusting to the demands of GCE A level programmes.

31 The tutorial system is well managed, and supported by policies on aspects such as schools' liaison, records of achievement and students' guidance. There are three teams of tutors, each managed effectively by a senior tutor. Short, daily tutorials provide a useful point of contact between students and their tutors. These sessions enable tutors to provide students with information and to respond to any concerns that they might have. There is one long tutorial each week which provides opportunities for discussion of topics such as health education and careers. A detailed and comprehensive tutorial programme is developed for the year. Senior tutors provide tutors with learning materials such as worksheets and questionnaires to help them deliver the programme. Students appreciate the support they are given.

32 Careers advice and guidance are of high quality. Effective liaison with Humberside Careers and Guidance Services results in careful planning of the support that will be provided by the service and the college. Careers advice is an integral part of the tutorial programme. In addition, students can make appointments for individual interviews with a careers officer or the college's careers co-ordinator. The careers library is well resourced. A wide range of computer software related to careers is available to students at various locations throughout the college. Job vacancies are advertised within the college. The annual college careers convention is a major event attracting many employers and representatives from further and higher education establishments. It is highly regarded by students. Students applying to higher education are well supported in preparing their applications. Much of the tutorial programme in the summer term is devoted to helping students to understand the options available to them. Visits are organised to universities and booklets listing the offers that have been made to past students provide useful information. Tutorials in the autumn term provide opportunities for students to complete their application forms. Senior tutors check carefully the quality of the completed application forms. Staff help students who have financial

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difficulties to receive support from a charitable trust fund to pay for the costs they incur in attending interviews at higher education establishments.

33 Students' progress is monitored through regular reviews with their personal tutors. Each subject tutor writes a report outlining the student's progress. A positive feature of the review process is the opportunity given to students to comment on the report and to add their own views about their progress. This practice is valued by students. Parents are invited to discuss students' progress at a consultation evening. Students are encouraged to update their records of achievement during tutorials. This is done more thoroughly in some groups than others.

34 Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported by a specialist tutor and a learning support assistant. The tutor liaises with local schools to make sure that appropriate support is available for the students when they begin their college courses. At the start of the current academic year, the college introduced the Basic Skills Agency screening test to help identify those students who might need additional support with their work. The results indicated that many more students than anticipated might need additional support. At the time of the inspection, not all the students had had their support needs assessed. However, many departments provide additional support for students, and there are also mathematics and English workshops to which students can be referred by tutors. Students speak positively about the support that tutors provide at breaktimes, lunchtimes and at the end of the college day. The growth in the number of overseas students studying at the college has increased the pressure for additional support. The college has recognised that there is a need for specialist support for students who have dyslexia and for students for whom English is a second language.

35 An electronic registration system enables students' attendance to be monitored efficiently. Tutors are given daily information about students' attendance which enables them to seek explanations for absences. Students are given a summary of their attendance record at their reviews and reports are sent to parents. Contracts which are designed to encourage students to attend college regularly are established with students whose attendance record is poor.

36 A confidential counselling service is provided for students and staff by a professionally-qualified counsellor who is a full-time member of the college staff. The service is used extensively.

37 Students are aware of their rights and responsibilities. These are explained during induction and are stated in the charter and the learner agreement. The students' association provides a useful channel of communication between students and senior managers. Students speak positively about the way in which the association is consulted about issues such as the content of the charter and the tutorial programme. Two liaison tutors provide effective support for the association. The association's officers consider that staff listen to their views and that action is taken to address some of the issues they raise.

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## TEACHING AND THE PROMOTION OF LEARNING

38 Of the 124 lessons observed, 71 per cent were judged to have strengths which outweighed weaknesses. Only 4 per cent were judged to have weaknesses which outweighed strengths. These percentages compare with 63 per cent and 8 per cent, respectively, for all colleges inspected in 1995-96, according to figures published in the *Chief Inspector's Annual Report 1995-96*. The following table summarises the grades allocated to the lessons observed.

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

Programmes	Grade 1	2	3	4	5	Totals
GCE AS/A level	19	39	15	2	0	75
GCSE	6	6	9	3	0	24
GNVQ	4	7	4	0	0	15
Other vocational	1	1	2	0	0	4
Other	3	2	1	0	0	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>124</b>

39 During the inspection, the number of students attending classes as a percentage of those on the register varied from 94 per cent in business to 69 per cent in art and design. The average attendance was 81 per cent and an average of 10 students attended each of the lessons observed. According to figures published in the *Chief Inspector's Annual Report 1995-96*, the national figure for attendance in the sixth form colleges inspected during 1995-96 was 84 per cent and an average of 11 students attended the lessons observed.

40 Teachers were enthusiastic about their subjects and relationships between staff and students were good. In the majority of sessions, schemes of work and lesson plans were provided. Lesson plans were of variable quality. In the best practice, links were made with previous sessions to set the lesson in context. However, some lesson plans provided only a brief outline of what was to be covered and objectives were not well defined or were unrelated to specific skills and concepts. Students experienced a range of teaching and learning methods, although in some lessons there was insufficient variety of activity to maintain students' interest. Students' learning was enhanced by the use of extra-curricular activities such as visits and field trips.

41 In mathematics, the standard of teaching and learning was consistently good. Lessons had specific objectives, mathematical ideas were clearly presented using a range of methods and an interactive style which encouraged students' contributions. In one lesson, in which students were collecting data for statistical purposes, the lesson commenced with an overview of underlying concepts, such as the various types of data that might be encountered, the effects of sample size and

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some of the terminology used. Students were encouraged to contribute ideas and ask questions. Then they carried out simple but effective exercises, such as throwing dice and measuring dimensions. Once this was completed, they pooled the data for use in subsequent sessions. The ideas were clearly presented and the work was varied and interesting and linked effectively to future work. However, in many lessons, there was little use of group work or mathematical debate. There was also little use of visual aids such as the overhead projector. The use of good-quality, commercially-produced teaching schemes and materials for GCE A level and GCSE underpinned much of the work and helped to ensure that teaching across the classes was consistent. Teachers set regular tests and assignments and provided good feedback to students on their progress.

42 Teaching in computing and information technology was consistently sound. In the better lessons teachers had clear objectives, created opportunities for students to ask questions and provided support to individual students in practical classes. In a first-year GCE A level computing lesson, the teacher reviewed some of the introductory ideas about data structures used by software writers. The teacher varied the pace of the work to allow students to make clear notes, and referred to the textbook so that students could link the topic with other work. The teacher stimulated lively interest amongst students by giving relevant examples and asking perceptive questions and finished by setting some follow-up exercises for students to do in their own time. However, the pace of work in some lessons was slow, teachers allowed students insufficient opportunities to contribute and there was too little variety of activity to maintain students' interest. On the recently-introduced advanced GNVQ in information technology, a lack of materials restricted the range of teaching methods that could be used.

43 The majority of science lessons were well planned, and teachers presented material in ways which helped to develop students' knowledge, understanding and skills. For example, in a GCE A level chemistry class which was designed to introduce infra-red spectroscopy, different notes played on a harmonica were used to illustrate the absorption of different frequencies of infra-red radiation by chemical bonds. In physics, practical and theoretical work were well integrated and students on the science, technology and society course were encouraged to develop presentational skills. Students studying GCE AS science, technology and society had each researched a different aspect of AIDS for homework and had each prepared a transparency for the overhead projector which was then used to support their presentation to the group. This was followed by an opportunity for questions. The ensuing discussions were skilfully managed by the teacher so that moral, economic and political aspects of the topic were covered. In many sessions, students made good use of opportunities to develop their skills, confidence and understanding. In a few less successful lessons, teachers failed to check that students had a clear understanding of practical techniques, or did not ensure that all students were actively involved in



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discussions. Opportunities were missed to support students' learning through the use of information technology.

44 In business studies, lessons were well planned. Teachers used a variety of strategies to maintain students' interest. In one class, students watched a video recording of the 'Money Programme' which predicted the outcomes of the budget. The students then debated the issues and came to a collective view as to the measures the chancellor might introduce. Where used, group work was effective with clearly stated tasks and supporting documentation. Teachers made effective use of the Humberside Education Business Partnership to establish links with local employers and to arrange visits for students to their companies, but there was little use of talks by visiting speakers from business to put business theory into a realistic context. In the majority of classes, teachers checked students' understanding throughout the lesson. Teachers paid attention to the development of key skills, especially students' abilities to use grammar and spelling correctly. Assessed work was returned to students promptly. Teachers did not draw sufficiently on students' backgrounds and interests such as their part-time jobs to reinforce their learning. In some lessons, teachers allowed the more extrovert students to dominate discussions.

45 The teaching and promotion of learning in art and design, performing arts and music was often good and occasionally outstanding. In performing arts, students' learning was enriched by the opportunity to perform publicly plays such as Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard* and Lorca's *Blood Wedding*. In music, the use of peripatetic teachers extended the opportunities students had for instrumental tuition. In exchange for individual music tuition, students were contracted to perform with the college's choirs and orchestras. Staff were, in the main, well qualified, caring and committed. However, in some lessons opportunities for learning were missed through teachers' tolerance of students' passivity, their lack of insistence on note taking, and their failure to ensure that all students had an opportunity to contribute to discussions.

46 In humanities, teachers were skilled in presenting information in ways which students could understand easily. Notes explaining particular aspects of a new topic helped students to understand what they were required to do. Teachers were skilled in classroom management. Learning materials were thoughtfully prepared and care was taken to ensure that they met the needs of all the students in the group. Students were given opportunities to participate in visits and field trips which were relevant to their subject. For example, students studying geography visited Wales to study glaciation, and students studying history visited the Imperial War Museum, the Museum of the Moving Image and the Houses of Parliament. However, in some lessons, students were given insufficient opportunities to contribute ideas and discuss opinions. Too many lessons were totally directed by the teacher and there was little interaction between the students.

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47 Lessons in modern foreign languages were conducted primarily in the language being studied. For example, in a first-year GCE A level Italian lesson, the teacher explained the form and use of grammatical structures entirely in Italian. In a second-year GCE A level Spanish lesson, a similar technique was used, and the students practised the grammatical forms by inventing sentences which related to their coursework topics. Teachers made effective use of authentic materials such as films, newspapers and tourist brochures. Vocational language units were based on realistic situations, including the college's foreign exchange links. Activities in many lessons were challenging, and a demanding work rate was expected from students. Foreign language assistants made a valuable contribution. Teachers encouraged students to read, listen to and watch foreign language materials outside the classroom. There were insufficient opportunities for students to participate in oral work in some lessons. Some lessons were poorly structured and, in others, group work was not fully exploited.

48 In social sciences there were comprehensive schemes of work. However, most lesson plans were poor, and did not identify the objectives of the lesson. In the better lessons, the aims were shared with students, good use was made of topical examples and personal experience, praise was given where appropriate, some difficult concepts were put across effectively and students' views were challenged constructively. In government and politics classes, students organised a weekly news review to ensure that they were aware of current events and issues. In some lessons, teachers did not check students' understanding, and gave students insufficient opportunities to develop their oral skills. Students and most staff had developed effective working relationships. There were few examples of work being differentiated to meet the needs of students of different abilities.

49 Teaching in English was planned carefully and courses were supported by a variety of extra-curricular activities. Teachers had established positive working relationships with students and gave them helpful feedback on their progress. One session which was led by a student was designed to help the group to prepare for an examination. The student talked with real knowledge and enthusiasm about film form, illustrating points about editing with clips from films such as *Citizen Kane* and *Pulp Fiction*. The lesson was lively and informative and gave students the chance to practise key skills. However, in many classes, the quality of learning was affected adversely because students were not given sufficient opportunities to discuss concepts and themes or to interact with each other. Teaching too often focused on the giving of information to students and provided them with few opportunities to develop their understanding of key concepts and analytical skills. Opportunities to reinforce learning through teaching and learning aids were often missed.

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## **STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENTS**

50 Students' responses in class demonstrated their interest in the subjects they were studying. They communicated well with teachers and with each other, and in discussion they were willing to draw from their own knowledge, experiences and ideas. For example, in science they were able to produce rational arguments to support their views and in business studies and economics they made reference to case studies and knowledge of the local economy. In foreign languages they were able to converse on a variety of topics of personal interest in the language being studied; for example students studying GCE A level Italian participated in a lively discussion on animal rights. Students were at ease working in groups, and did so co-operatively and effectively. In science, students carried out practical work confidently and competently, in groups and individually. Some effective group presentations were observed in business studies.

51 Students' written work generally showed evidence of good preparation and organisation, and was clearly and attractively presented. The college's scheme to accredit students' skills in information technology has resulted in a good level of skill in wordprocessing and in the use of spreadsheets and databases, evident in much of the written work inspected. In some areas of science, students' information technology skills were underdeveloped. Coursework options in some examination syllabuses were effectively used to encourage skills in individual research. For example, GCE A level Spanish students had researched topics related to the life and culture of Spain, and their essays showed good understanding. Poor note-taking skills were observed in some classes in business and humanities.

52 The 313 students, aged 16 to 18, who were entered for GCE AS/A level examinations in 1996 scored, on average, 4.5 points per subject entry (where grade A=10 points, 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 1996 performance tables published by the DfEE. This represents a steady improvement from the averages in 1994 and 1995 of 3.9 and 4.1 points, respectively. Of the 900 examination entries by full-time students at GCE A level in 1996, 44 per cent gained grades A to C and the overall A to E pass rate was 86 per cent. The national figures for students of all ages in sixth form colleges for 1996 were 51 per cent and 85 per cent, respectively.

53 To gain a realistic picture of students' achievements, the college measures their performance at GCE AS/A level in relation to their entry qualifications. Value-added analysis of the 1995 and 1996 results shows that, on average, students achieve results which are closely in line with those predicted on the basis of their achievements at GCSE. In 1996, in 17 of the 36 subjects for which comparisons have been drawn, students achieved better results than those predicted. Particularly good value-added scores were obtained by candidates in general studies, music and sociology, and poor scores by those in psychology, one of the history

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syllabuses, and photography. The college's academic performance, measured in value-added terms, has improved steadily.

54 Of the 510 entries for GCSE subjects in 1996, 51 per cent were graded A to C. This matches the average A to C pass rate for sixth form colleges in 1996. Of the subjects with 10 or more entries in 1996, those which exceeded the national averages by at least 20 per cent were travel and tourism, history, geography and sociology. Results in business, psychology and science subjects fell significantly below the national averages.

55 Seventy-six per cent of students in their final year of study on the advanced vocational courses, and 55 per cent of those on the intermediate vocational courses, included in the DfEE's 1996 performance tables were successful. For both levels of course, this places the college among the middle third of colleges in the further education sector on this performance measure. The pass rate for vocational courses in sixth form colleges in 1995 was 77 per cent, the most recent year for which figures are available. In 1996, the college's success rate exceeded this figure in art and design, science and performing arts courses, but fell significantly below in business, health and social care and information technology. Pass rates in RSA Examinations Board (RSA) examinations were high: 88 per cent gained the qualification and 64 per cent of entries resulted in distinctions. All 11 students completing the BTEC national diploma course in performing arts were successful, and seven gained merits or distinctions.

56 Students on post-GCE A level courses achieve a high rate of success. All but one of the 18 students completing the art foundation course in 1996 gained places on degree courses. Of the 38 students enrolled on the year-zero access to science degree course, 37 continued on to the second year of the degree at the University of Hull.

57 Retention rates vary considerably between subjects and courses. Only 74 per cent of those who started two-year courses in 1994 completed their courses within two years. On the advanced level vocational programmes, retention over the two years varied from 63 per cent in business to 81 per cent in art and design. In a quarter of GCE A level subjects, including law, chemistry, English literature and geography, fewer than 70 per cent of students completed the course. Retention rates in subjects varied considerably. For example, only seven of the 20 students starting GCE A level law in 1994 completed it in 1996, whereas 31 of the 34 GCE A level physics students completed the course. Of those students who started one-year courses in 1995, 87 per cent completed their courses. On average, only 70 per cent of students enrolled on GCSE subjects in November 1995 completed the year in that subject.

58 The college monitors the destinations of students on completion of their courses. Of those completing advanced level courses in 1996, 62 per cent entered higher education, 17 per cent progressed to employment and 11 per cent to further education and training. Seven per cent were unemployed, and the destinations of a further 3 per cent were unknown.

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Of the students completing intermediate level courses, 40 per cent progressed to further courses at Wyke Sixth Form College, 22 per cent to further education or training elsewhere, and 20 per cent to employment. Eight per cent were unemployed and the destinations of 10 per cent were unknown.

59 The enrichment programme of college studies and extra-curricular activities provides students with opportunities to broaden their range of experience and achievement. Students regularly participate in sport and music at national and regional level and have won national awards. Students studying performing arts have won major awards and there are numerous public and touring performances by the music and drama groups. These include a dramatic production at the Edinburgh International Festival each year since 1990. Some students also participate in events organised by Theatre in Education, National Student Theatre and Northern Theatre. Business studies students have won the Institute of Directors' national award in marketing.

### **QUALITY ASSURANCE**

60 The college's quality assurance system focuses on a detailed set of standards for the four stages of the students' experience: pre-entry, entry, during the course and at exit. Each standard is supported by statements of the evidence to be collected and the measures to be used to check whether the standard has been achieved. For example, one standard states that work will be set regularly, marked and returned within an agreed deadline. The evidence to be collected is whether the marking policy includes these features and the measure used to check if the standard has been achieved is the degree of satisfaction recorded by students in the course questionnaire. The standards are cross-referenced against the college's mission statement and Council Circular 93/28, *Assessing Achievement*.

61 The college verifies its performance against these standards through student questionnaires, through the audit of course documentation by heads of faculty, and by other methods such as small group discussions with students and detailed analyses of students' achievements. The questionnaire issued to students in the summer term is designed to be modified by teaching staff to reflect the differing nature of individual courses. Other questionnaires are used to monitor the quality of specific events such as the activities arranged for pupils in year 10 at partner schools. However, there are no surveys to seek employers' views about the quality of the college's provision. The results of the questionnaires are summarised and issues discussed at meetings of, for example, the management team and the quality assurance working group which comprises staff and students from across the college. Appropriate action is implemented to address the issues highlighted through the reviews. For example, when it was found that a number of students did not understand the complaints procedures, additional sessions on this topic were included

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in the tutorial programme. However, the action taken in response to issues raised is not always well recorded.

62 The quality of teaching is monitored by the heads of department, who write an annual report and then meet with the vice-principal responsible for quality assurance to discuss the issues raised. The report records key data such as retention rates, examination achievements, and the progress students have made compared with their GCSE results on entry to the college. Students' responses to seven questions in the questionnaires are also recorded. A positive feature of the document is that the data recorded are compared with the average for other departments across the college. The report requires a commentary on the action taken in response to the points raised in the previous year's review and notes to be written to inform the development plan for the following year. There are some gaps in the data collected. For example, there is no space for comments made by external verifiers, and there is no reference to the examination results achieved during the previous year or to national achievement rates.

63 Written reports on the overall quality of the college's academic provision are presented to the corporation in December. A wide variety of data is reported, including the aggregated results of the questionnaires, retention rates, examination pass rates for recent years, comparison between the actual performance of students at GCE A level with their predicted performance based on GCSE achievements, and an analysis of how students who entered the college with specific GCSE points scores have fared at GCE A level. A good feature is the requirement that issues arising out of these reports are the subject of further analysis by the vice-principal responsible for quality assurance, and are discussed at the next meeting of the finance and general purposes committee. The systematic observation of teaching does not form part of the quality assurance system. The procedures followed and the documents used within the quality assurance system are not collated in a single document such as the staff handbook.

64 The quality assurance system is well conceived. However, it is a relatively new process and there are some weaknesses in its implementation. For example, the meetings of heads of department with the vice-principal, which were scheduled for the autumn term, were not held until January due to the late arrival of the value-added data. Some reports contain evidence of thorough review and systematic development planning; in others, the documentation required for the meetings has not been completed fully and some of the action plans arising from the reviews are of poor quality. However, corrective action is often taken in advance of the meetings and is monitored informally. For example, poor results in one GCE A level subject resulted in a thorough investigation and amendments to the teaching scheme during the autumn term. In another example, an audit revealed that a marking policy was inadequate; this has now been corrected and the student handbook amended accordingly. The college is taking a considered approach to the setting of targets for its

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provision. Following an analysis of students' responses to the questionnaires, eight targets relating to student support were established. However, there are no targets relating to retention or pass rates in examinations.

65 There is a systematic approach to the development of new courses. New course proposals are written to a standard set of headings which require an analysis of the demand for the programme and the resources needed. The proposal is then presented to the college management team. Some new courses have been piloted as part of the college's enrichment programme before being offered as GCE A level courses.

66 Quality assurance processes for some cross-college functions are not well developed. For example, there is no formal, systematic reporting of staff-development activities. However, progress has been made in some areas such as finance, where standards are at an advanced stage of development. The quality assurance development plan includes a commitment to develop standards for other areas such as administration.

67 The college's charter specifies what is expected of the student and what the student can expect from the college. It also includes guidance on what to do if things go wrong. It is written to complement other college documents. There is scope to increase the use of numerical targets and to include, for example, commitments the college might make to employers concerning the preparation of students for work placement. Students receive a copy of the charter and its contents are discussed at induction. Complaints that are made are logged carefully and the action taken is recorded. The records show that, where necessary, the college takes firm action.

68 New teaching and support staff, both full time and part time, receive an appropriate induction to the college. There is a well-documented appraisal system for all staff. The process focuses on the professional development of the appraisee, guarantees confidentiality, and includes the observation of teaching. It operates over a two-year cycle and has been operating for three years. Only about 70 per cent of the college's staff have been appraised. Staff speak positively about the induction and appraisal processes and the support they receive through formal and informal contacts within the college.

69 The development needs of staff are also identified through questionnaires which all staff are asked to complete and through the annual development planning process. A range of training opportunities is available to support developments across the college. Staff are able to attend external courses and there is a series of one-day activities, some of which are run jointly with other colleges. Individual training events are evaluated and there are effective arrangements to disseminate information to other staff. Teachers and support staff speak highly of the support they receive. There are some gaps in the provision. For example, management training has not been provided for new managers and some staff who teach GNVQ programmes require further training.

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70 The college's self-assessment report was written under the headings of the FEFC inspection framework in Council Circular 93/28, *Assessing Achievement*. It considered each aspect in terms of strengths and areas for development. These were clearly stated and reference was made to supporting evidence. The areas for development were supported by action plans or details of current developments. There is considerable agreement between the statements in the report and the judgements of the inspection team. However, in some sections, the issues identified do not include all the weaknesses identified by the inspection team.

## **RESOURCES**

### **Staffing**

71 Teachers are well qualified and experienced: 93 per cent possess first degrees and 95 per cent have a recognised teaching qualification. Twenty-nine per cent of teachers have a higher degree. With the exception of health and social care, sufficient teachers on vocational courses have assessor awards. A relatively low proportion of staff have recent and relevant industrial experience. The college is working towards refining its measures of efficiency of staff deployment to link the average size of classes to total teaching hours. Currently, for example, in science between GNVQ and GCE A level groups, there are some significant variations in class size and consequent workloads. All academic staff are tutors and the majority of senior managers, including the principal, teach. Heads of faculty have on average 23 hours per week direct learning contact, including tutorials. The college has identified the need to improve communications between evening class teachers and the rest of the college to ensure more consistent teaching of the curriculum.

72 Technician support across the college is effective, and has recently been enhanced by additional specialist support for media studies. There are sufficient administrative staff, and the increased priority given to computerised management information has led to the appointment of additional staff in this area. Support staff are appropriately qualified and experienced. For example, four hold national vocational qualifications (NVQs) in health and safety. All support staff are able to meet together as a faculty twice each term and many college committees include support staff.

73 Personnel policies and local personnel agreements are well documented, and include a detailed set of procedures for the recruitment and selection of new staff. The staff handbook includes a model code of conduct which sets out the principles of professional behaviour at work. Job descriptions are provided for all staff and reviewed when responsibilities change. The college works collaboratively with the other local sixth form colleges and the local education authority (LEA) over personnel policy and practice.



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### **Equipment/learning resources**

74 Classrooms are equipped to a common standard which includes provision of a whiteboard, overhead projector and screen. The college has a good range of audio-visual equipment which is managed centrally to maximise its availability; staff have ready access to three high volume photocopiers. The quality of specialist equipment is often good. In science, for example, income from the franchised degree programme has been used to purchase expensive items such as chemical balances and a mobile fume cupboard. In music, there is an extensive range of recording equipment, keyboards and other instruments. A dedicated resources area and 20-booth language laboratory support the teaching of modern foreign languages. The design technology workshop is equipped with a range of modern power and handtools and maintained to a high standard. Whilst all students receive a textbook for their course of study, many subject areas have not yet developed materials which students can use to learn independently.

75 The college has 200 computers, of which 160 are available to students. This provides a ratio of full-time equivalent students to computers of 6.6:1. The workstations, 12 of which have a database facility for compact disk read-only memory (CD-ROM), are networked and organised in six main rooms, two of which are fully accessible to staff and students at any time of the college day. A rolling programme of replacement every three years means that many machines are of the latest standard. The management of information technology resources is undertaken by a steering group comprising staff with responsibilities in this area and senior managers which meets fortnightly. There is also a separate user group, open to all staff, but the steering group does not routinely receive the minutes of this group's meetings.

76 The college library has 13,000 volumes and an expanding range of periodicals, videos and compact disks. There are some shortages of specialist texts, for example in media studies and English, and few audio and video cassettes for modern foreign languages. The library is managed by a qualified librarian, supported by two part-time assistants. All students receive an introduction to library facilities as part of their induction. Although the library catalogue is on the computer network, it is slow and complex to access and the college is currently in the process of upgrading this facility. Partly because of the cost of this upgrade, the allocation of funds to library provision in the current academic year is particularly low, averaging only about £7 per student. In some subject areas, for example physics and chemistry, spending on library books in the previous academic year was only £20. In addition, a recent internal audit report drew attention to the very low incidence of book loans over the last two years. The librarian is seeking to address these issues. A library committee is in existence but has not met for more than a year; its composition and terms of reference are being reviewed.

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## **Accommodation**

77 The college is located on a single site and when it opened in 1988 benefited from substantial new buildings and the complete refurbishment of a former junior high school. The significant expansion of student numbers since 1988 has led to the construction of additional teaching rooms, an extension of dining and social facilities and the acquisition of a number of mobile classrooms. The three wings housing science, art and design, the administration area and the library, provide high-quality accommodation. The rooms in the main building are well furnished, decorated and carpeted; classroom furniture can be arranged flexibly to suit different teaching methods. Although the external appearance of some of the mobile buildings is poor, the interiors provide comfortable accommodation. In the case of mathematics in particular, the six classrooms located in one large building provide an attractive learning environment which includes an entrance hall with extensive displays. Some of the specialist baserooms, for example those in art and design, are also of high quality. The college benefits from modern drama and lecture theatres, the former having collapsible seating which enables the space to be used flexibly. Sports facilities are restricted: the gym doubles as an examinations room and the changing rooms are small with no locker space. Student social areas are small for the number of students using them. Because of restricted space in the library, study carrels have had to be located in the main concourse and some of the corridors.

78 The accommodation strategy contains a detailed evaluation of the condition of the current estate. A planned maintenance programme has been constructed over a 10-year period and surveys have been undertaken to measure the efficiency of room and space utilisation. There is a mismatch between the size of some teaching groups and the classrooms allocated to them. For example, the rooms used for the teaching of government and politics and the learning support baseroom are too small for the number of students in the groups, whilst in English small groups are accommodated in large rooms. The dispersal of English classrooms around the college makes it difficult for staff to establish a coherent subject identity. Appropriate attention is paid to security through night surveillance and the installation of intruder alarms. A college health and safety committee meets at least monthly and proper controls for hazardous substances and other risks have been implemented. Students with restricted mobility have access to all except two rooms on the site.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND ISSUES**

79 The strengths of the college are:

- the extensive range of programmes and enrichment activities
- well-established links with external agencies including institutions in several European countries
- effective marketing of current programmes

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- the efficient management information system
  - effective leadership from senior managers
  - the well-structured pre-enrolment and induction programme
  - the strong support provided for students through the tutorial system
  - good standards of teaching and learning in many programmes
  - the improving examination results in many subjects
  - the well-planned quality assurance framework
  - well-qualified and experienced staff who are committed to helping students to achieve success in their studies
  - good levels of basic and specialist equipment including modern information technology equipment
  - the high quality of the accommodation which provides a comfortable and stimulating learning environment.
- 80 If it is to continue to improve standards, the college should:
- extend its curriculum links with schools
  - exploit more fully the links with business and industry
  - improve aspects of the strategic planning process
  - take action to ensure that the management of departments and faculties is of a consistently high standard
  - increase the levels of specialist learning support and improve the co-ordination of the separate elements of support
  - improve the quality of teaching and learning by providing staff with more opportunities to share good practice
  - continue to improve retention rates and achievements in some subjects
  - ensure that quality assurance processes are implemented consistently.

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## FIGURES

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- 1 Percentage student numbers by age (as at November 1996)

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  - 2 Percentage student numbers by level of study (as at November 1996)

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  - 3 Student numbers by mode of attendance and curriculum area (as at November 1996)

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  - 4 Staff profile – staff expressed as full-time equivalents (as at November 1996)

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  - 5 Income (for 12 months to July 1996)

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  - 6 Expenditure (for 12 months to July 1996)

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

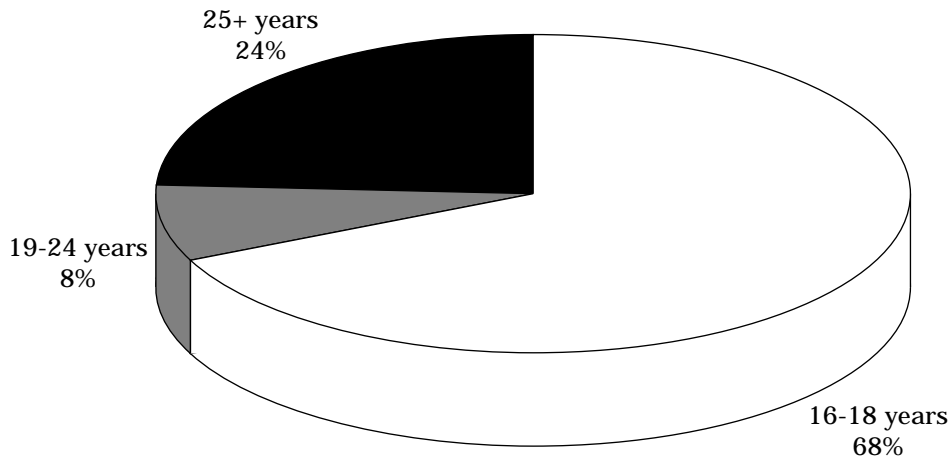
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**Figure 1**

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**Wyke Sixth Form College: percentage student numbers by age (as at November 1996)**



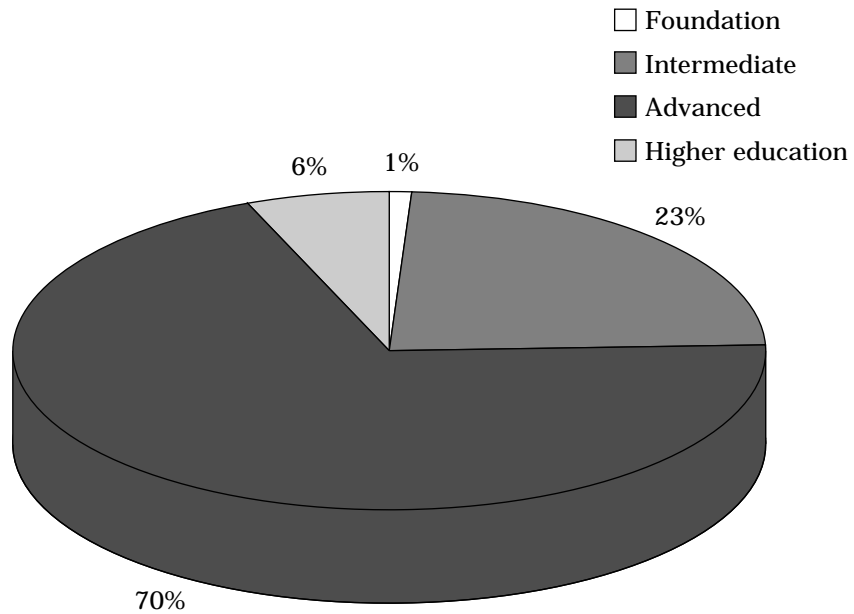
Student numbers: 1,466

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**Figure 2**

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**Wyke Sixth Form College: percentage student numbers by level of study (as at November 1996)**



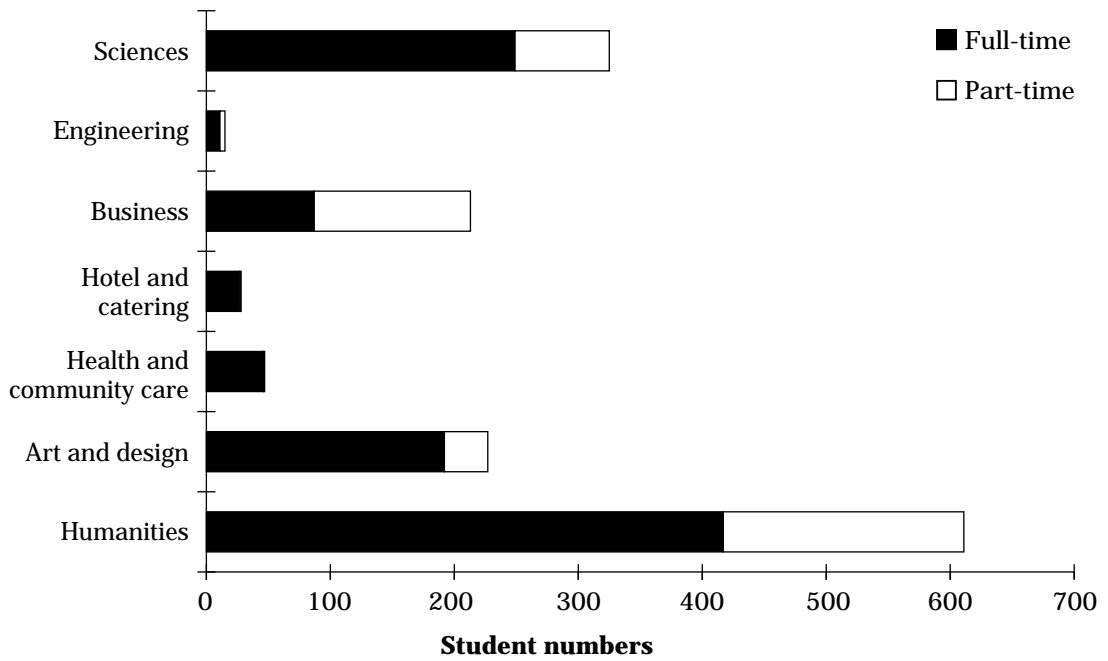
Student numbers: 1,466

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**Figure 3**

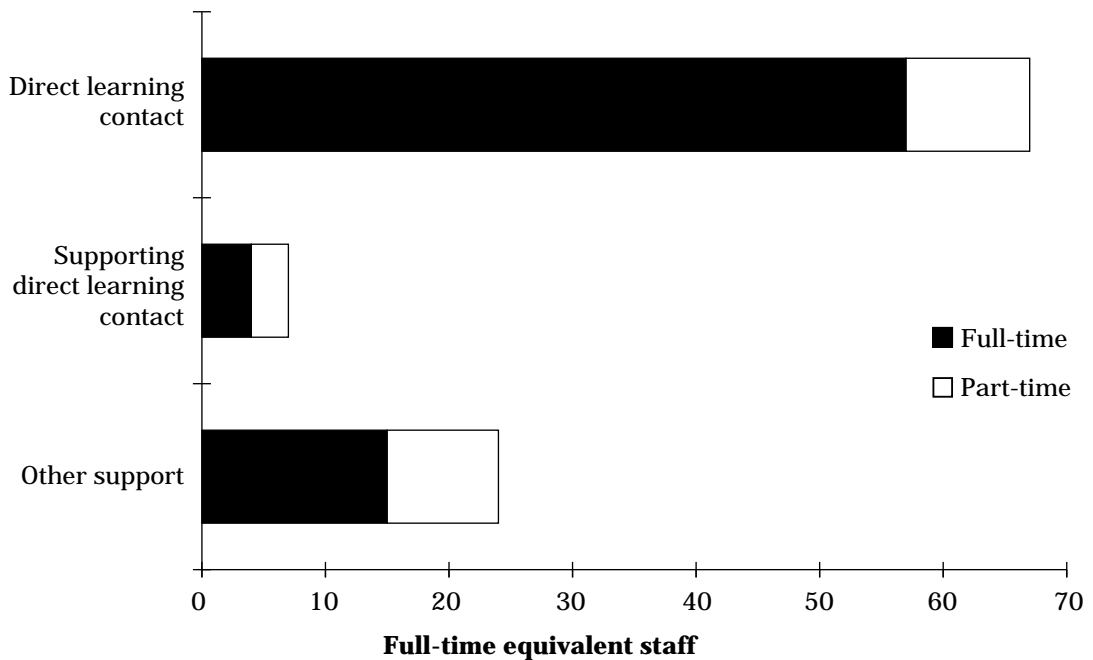
**Wyke Sixth Form College: student numbers by mode of attendance and curriculum area (as at November 1996)**



Student numbers: 1,466

**Figure 4**

**Wyke Sixth Form College: staff profile – staff expressed as full-time equivalents (as at November 1996)**



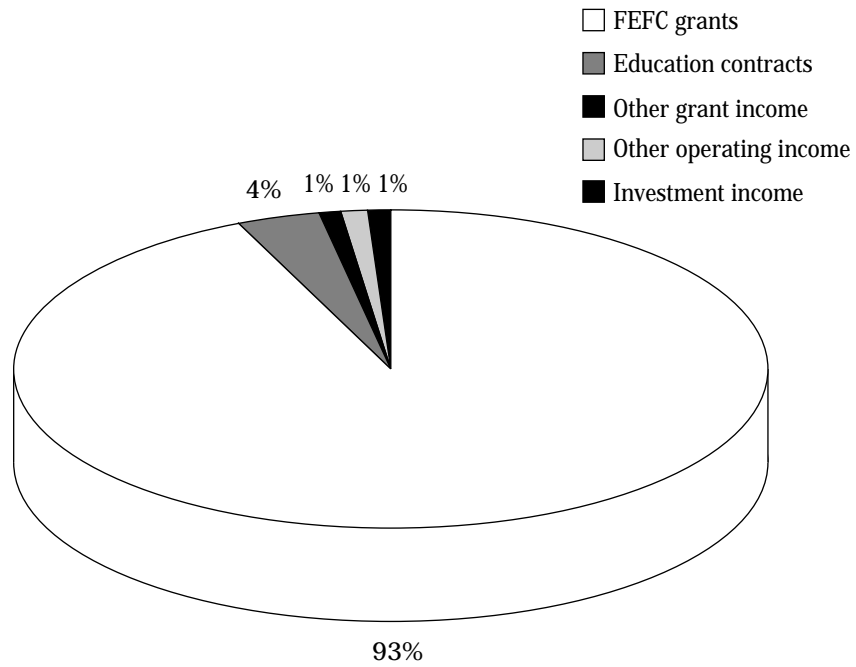
Full-time equivalent staff: 98

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**Figure 5**

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**Wyke Sixth Form College: income (for 12 months to July 1996)**

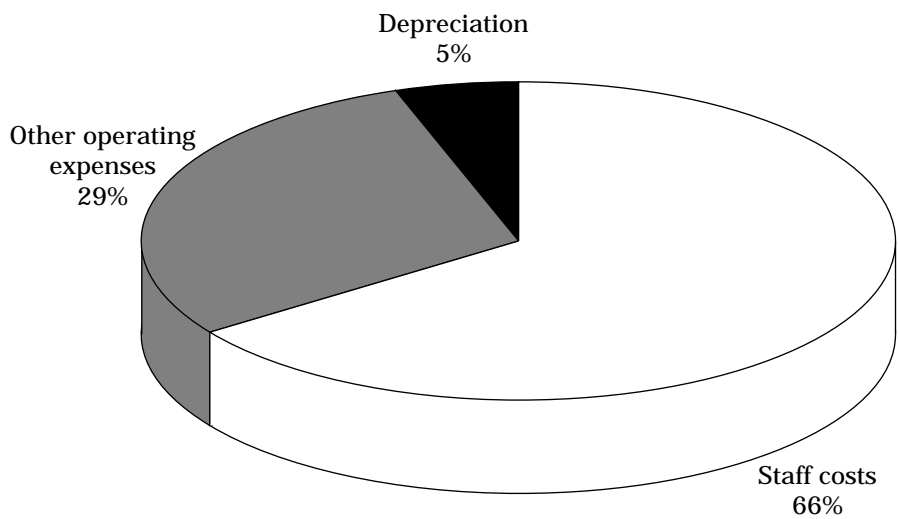


Income: £3,777,000

**Figure 6**

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**Wyke Sixth Form College: expenditure (for 12 months to July 1996)**



Expenditure: £3,671,000

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