Pendleton College

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.*

FEFC INSPECTION REPORT 48/95

PENDLETON COLLEGE
NORTH WEST REGION
Inspected November 1994 – January 1995

Summary

Pendleton College offers a wide range of full-time courses for school leavers and good opportunities for progression. Rapid progress has recently been made in developing effective marketing procedures. Governors have a clear perception of their role and make an effective contribution to the strategic guidance of the college. Sound relationships with local schools and efficient recruitment procedures ensure a smooth transition from school to college. Well-qualified staff maintain a consistently high standard of teaching. Accommodation is of a good standard. An effective working relationship has been established with the local training and enterprise council, though links with local business are underdeveloped. A number of cross-college policies and systems have been developed but arrangements for their implementation and monitoring need strengthening. Systems for identifying and meeting the learning support needs of students are of varying quality. Retention rates are currently a major concern to the college. Examination results at GCE A level have been improving steadily over the last few years though results in some subjects are below average for sixth form colleges. GCSE results are poor. There is a strong commitment to developing quality assurance procedures but many of these are not yet in place. The library and library services fail to meet students' requirements.

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	3
Quality assurance	3
Resources: staffing	2
equipment/learning resources	3
accommodation	2

Curriculum area	Grade	Curriculum area	Grade
Science	2	Art and design	2
Mathematics and computing	2		
Business studies	2	Humanities	2
		English	2
Sport studies and leisure and tourism	1		

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

1   Pendleton College was inspected in three stages during the academic year 1994-95. Arrangements for enrolment and induction were inspected at appropriate times in September; specialist inspections of curriculum areas took place in the week beginning 14 November; and cross-college aspects were inspected largely during the week beginning 23 January. Fourteen inspectors were involved in the inspections, using a total of 57 inspector days. They observed 94 classes, studied a wide range of documents, examined samples of students' work, observed a full meeting of the corporation board and had meetings with governors, college managers, teaching and support staff, and students. In addition, they held discussions with the education manager from the Manchester Training and Enterprise Council (TEC), a work placement supervisor from a local hospital, representatives from local schools and officers from the local education authority (LEA).

THE COLLEGE AND ITS AIMS

2   Pendleton College is situated on a single site within the city of Salford, and shares fields with a neighbouring school. College buildings date from the 1960s and formerly housed a technical grammar school. The college was established as a sixth form college in 1973 as part of the reorganisation of post-16 education within Salford. There are three other further education colleges in Salford, all within a three-mile radius: Eccles College (a sixth form college), De La Salle (a voluntary-aided Roman Catholic sixth form college) and Salford College (a general further education college). Further education courses are also provided at University College Salford.

3   Salford's population is predicted to decline by 0.5 per cent per annum over the next few years. Minority ethnic groups form just over 2 per cent of the population. The largest categories of employment in Salford are manufacturing, distribution and other services. At the time of the inspection, the unemployment rate for Salford was 10.3 per cent, compared with an average of 9.2 per cent for the north west as a whole.

4   The college's students are drawn mainly from the 12 local authority schools in Salford. Some also come from the four voluntary-aided Roman Catholic schools, a voluntary-aided Church of England school and a grant-maintained school within the city. Seventeen per cent of students are from schools outside the city boundary. A small number of adult students attend evening classes at the college or use distance-learning facilities. The participation rate in post-16 education in Salford has been rising slowly but steadily over recent years. In 1994, 56 per cent of 16 year olds in Salford stayed on in full-time education. The average for the north west as a whole is 59 per cent. A Manchester TEC survey carried out in 1993 shows that 25 per cent of Salford school leavers achieved five General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) grades A-C compared with a national average of 38 per cent.

5   In 1993-94, the college had 794 enrolments, slightly in excess of its target of 792. At the time of the inspection, there were 742 students on roll, 603 of whom were studying full time. Enrolments by age and level of study are shown in figures 1 and 2, and enrolments by mode of attendance

and curriculum area in figure 3. The college has a full-time equivalent of 48.2 teaching staff and 13.4 support staff. A staff profile, with staff expressed as full-time equivalents, is shown in figure 4.

6   Curriculum provision is allocated to 10 departments: art and design, business studies, English and media, geography and leisure studies, history, theology and law, mathematics, modern languages, physical education, science and social science. Between them they offer 31 subjects at General Certificate of Education advanced level (GCE A level), seven at GCE advanced supplementary (AS), 28 at GCSE, six General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) programmes, a pre-services course, a pre-teaching course and a variety of secretarial options.

7   The college sees its mission as seeking to ensure greater local participation in further education and to encourage students to aim high. To achieve these aims it is in the process of broadening its curriculum and developing the 'comfort, appropriateness and attractiveness of the learning environment'. In doing so it intends that 'its students should, at the end of a course, be appropriately qualified, better prepared for continuing education or the world of work, more self-confident and socially responsible'.

RESPONSIVENESS AND RANGE OF PROVISION

8   In line with the strategic plan, the college is widening the range of opportunities open to students by developing foundation programmes, alternative routes at intermediate level and more courses at advanced level. Some departments have introduced new syllabuses or turned to modular courses, in order to cater more effectively for students.

9   There is a commitment to expand the college's range of GNVQ programmes. The college introduced GNVQs in business, health and social care, and art and design in 1993. This year, the range has been extended to include science, leisure and tourism, and information technology. Opportunities are taken to use GNVQ provision to broaden students' GCE A level programmes. Students taking GCE A level geography are combining this with an advanced GNVQ in leisure and tourism. Initial moves into adult education have successfully attracted over 100 enrolments on evening courses.

10   Marketing is the direct responsibility of the principal pending an appointment to the vacant post of marketing officer. As yet, the college does not have a comprehensive marketing strategy, but rapid progress has been made in developing effective marketing procedures and a marketing committee has been established. Information from staff and students in local schools, and from the staff of the local careers office, is put to good use in designing and distributing good-quality publicity materials. The college assesses the attractiveness of these materials by first trying them out on groups of college students. The impact of mailshots and the response to publicity materials are carefully monitored. Although the prospectus is clear and detailed, greater prominence is given to GCE A levels than to GNVQ programmes. In this respect, the prospectus fails to reflect the college's intention to maintain parity of esteem between GNVQ and GCSE/GCE courses.

11   Liaison with local high schools is extensive and involves a range of recruitment activities. Trained liaison staff, representing all departments, visit schools and participate in careers events and open days. Many departments run taster days and similar curriculum events for 15 and 16 year old pupils.

12   There are some good links with higher education. The college has a collaborative arrangement with University College Salford to help art and design students in their progress to higher education; chemistry students carry out project work using equipment at Manchester Metropolitan University; and the college is represented in a local further and higher education consortium dealing with progression and credit accumulation.

13   Parents speak well of the college and of the accessibility and responsiveness of staff. They receive copies of subject assessments produced as part of the process for recording achievement and are invited to parents' evenings once a year.

14   There are positive and productive links with the LEA. The college makes use of the LEA's expertise in a number of areas, including procedures for grants and awards, and participates in inter-college strategic-development groups organised by the LEA.

15   Effective links have been established with the Manchester TEC at both strategic and operational levels. The college is participating with other colleges in a TEC-funded project to market part-time GNVQ programmes. It is also receiving TEC funding to develop and test a system for tracking student destinations. Strategic links are strengthened through the TEC representation on the college board. Both the college and the TEC value their working relationship.

16   There are few links with local employers. Those that do exist, mainly concern the provision of work experience for students. As yet, no links have been developed with the local education-business partnership, the main local forum for collaboration between employers and education. In mathematics and computing, and art and design, the weakness of the links with industry is having adverse effects on course development and students' work experience.

17   The equal opportunities policy is well publicised. Students from minority ethnic groups form 5.9 per cent of the college population, which is more than double the proportion of those from minority ethnic backgrounds in the local population. Women continue to be under represented on computing programmes, despite the college's efforts to redress the balance. Though the college has a policy to recruit students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, there were no such students enrolled at the time of the inspection.

GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

18   The governing body is active and effective. There are 15 members, including the principal. The seven independent governors between them have expertise in legal matters, accounting, finance, personnel, health, insurance, and vocational education and training. In addition, there are two parent members, two staff members, a member from higher education

and two co-opted members from the local community. One of the members, a TEC employee, represents Manchester TEC. At the time of the inspection, the college was seeking to fill one vacancy with a governor from the business sector. Meetings of the full board take place at least once each term and are invariably well attended. Much of the work of the board is carried out through its four subcommittees: policy and finance; audit; personnel; and remuneration. There is a published calendar of meetings. The policy and finance and the personnel subcommittees meet more frequently to cope with demands of business.

19   Governors were involved in the development of the strategic plan from the outset and they helped to draw up the college's mission statement. They are concerned to oversee the planned development of the college and to consider the strategic implications of proposed actions. They use their expertise effectively in the interests of the college. Members of subcommittees are selected carefully to ensure that their experience and skills are put to best use. All governors visit the college informally at regular intervals and they have a more formally organised visit at least once a year, during which they observe lessons and talk to staff. In addition, members receive and take up invitations to the college's open days and other academic and social events.

20   Staff are aware of the college's mission and of its broad strategic objectives. The latter are not clearly linked to timescales and the implications of some objectives for college systems and practice are not fully identified.

21   All departments have clearly-structured development plans some of which closely reflect the college's strategic plan. Some departments do not keep records of their meetings or of actions which have been agreed. Some heads of department have a limited involvement in strategic planning and development, and many are unclear about where responsibility lies for gathering and using information on student attendance, retention and destinations. There is little effective use of performance indicators at departmental level.

22   The management structure is undergoing a phased reorganisation to align it more closely with the drive to achieve the college's strategic aims, including the efficient deployment of staff. Recent changes in staffing, due to early retirement or staff leaving to take up other posts, have enabled the college to make significant progress in implementing the reorganisation. Departments are now more consistent in size and in numbers of staff. Further progress is dependent largely on staff leaving and on closer alignment between staff training and strategic objectives.

23   The management approach across the college is open and supportive. The senior management team consists of the principal and two vice-principals, one responsible for curriculum and resources, the other for pastoral and personnel matters. The senior management team is supported by four senior tutors, a senior curriculum co-ordinator and a finance manager. All staff have job descriptions and lines of accountability are clear. The responsibility for pastoral matters lies with the four senior tutors who work to the vice-principal (personnel). Senior tutors manage

tutorial support across departments. Responsibility for the cross-college management and implementation of other student support systems, for example learning support, is not clearly allocated. Heads of department have responsibility for curriculum matters and work to the vice-principal (curriculum). Each of the 10 departments is staffed by a head and, on average, three staff. The small size of departments enables heads to consult frequently with staff on a range of issues and most staff are involved in curriculum review and development.

24   The extent of collaboration between departments varies. There is little formal collaboration on curriculum matters or resources. The heads of department group, which meets twice each term, has a remit to advise on curriculum policy. In practice, it is limited as a forum for cross-college monitoring of curriculum issues and exchange of ideas, and the group rarely advises or makes recommendations on strategic issues. There is little cross-college co-ordination of common issues and concerns such as curriculum development and assessment.

25   There is an effective communication system based on weekly-timetabled meetings. The schedule allows for twice-termly meetings of departmental and cross-college groups. These include departmental staff, college staff, senior tutors, specialist groups such as schools liaison and marketing, and the heads of department group which is seen by the college as its academic board. Not all of these groups keep minutes, though issues, concerns and recommended actions are communicated to senior management. In addition, the principal meets all staff for a short weekly meeting. A weekly college bulletin is issued to staff, and to students through tutorial meetings, and is displayed on a television screen in the reception area. At course and subject level, staff communicate well, making good use of the informal meeting opportunities offered by being in small departments and on a single site.

26   Responsibility for the development and implementation of college policies, such as those for equal opportunities and staff development, is allocated to senior managers, in some cases assisted by committees. These committees meet irregularly and are not included in the meetings schedule. There are often no formal mechanisms for monitoring the implementation of cross-college policies, and practice at departmental level is not consistent. For example, there is a college policy on student attendance but not all departments interpret it in the same way and it is applied with varying rigour.

27   Pendleton College's average level of funding for 1994-95 is £21.15 per unit. The median for sixth form colleges is £19.81. Summaries of income and expenditure for the 16 months to July 1994 are shown in figures 5 and 6.

28   Funding is allocated to cross-college cost centres and to individual departments using a formula which takes into account historical factors and weighted student numbers. Budget holders monitor their own cost centres and receive monthly reports to help them. In addition, expenditure is monitored by the finance manager who checks for variance from agreed

expenditure and for unauthorised spending. Monthly reports are provided for the board, which, as well as showing actual income and expenditure, indicate trends over the financial year. While there is a clear system for setting and allocating funding to departments, the allocation of funding within some departments is unsystematic. In some departments, insufficient attention is paid to defining the resource implications of course developments and other planned strategies.

29   Currently the college management information system is a mixture of computer-based and manual databases which do not fully meet management needs. The college is in the process of developing a single, integrated, computer-based management information system. Reliable systems are in place for certain student records and for finance, and staff make good use of reports from these systems. Other aspects of the current systems lack flexibility and their full potential has yet to be realised. Reports are not easily accessible to academic staff; for example, they have to be specifically requested rather than being supplied routinely, and the information they contain is not easily analysed. Use of performance indicators to inform planning and decision making is limited.

STUDENTS' RECRUITMENT, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

30   Recruitment is well organised. There are effective links with local schools which ensure a smooth transition of students from school to college. College staff regularly visit schools and prospective students are given opportunities to visit the college during open days and evenings. A conference for new students in July provides students with a useful introduction to the college and to the courses they will be studying. Admission arrangements are efficient and the process is smooth. Students are made to feel welcome. Administrative processes are sound and thorough.

31   Although students are encouraged to enrol on courses which match their levels of achievement and aspirations, not all students make informed choices. In some cases, the aspirations and abilities of students are not matched to the courses they are following. Access to external careers advice is not available during enrolment. There is no system of accrediting prior learning or systematically assessing students' strengths and needs.

32   Standards of induction vary. Subject and course inductions are clear, helpful and interesting; they provide a good introduction to the nature of the course and its teaching and assessment methods. By contrast, tutor group inductions frequently lack purpose and are not good introductions to the college. Only half a day is allocated to induction and this limits its achievement and lowers its status. The college does not monitor the effectiveness of its induction programme.

33   Early in the course, each student signs a learning agreement which details their responsibilities and those of the college. The agreement sets a target for attendance at classes. There is a system for monitoring attendance but it is not implemented consistently across the college.

34   All full-time students have a personal tutor. There are timetabled tutorial periods for 15 minutes every day and students have to attend at least three of these per week. Tutors are also allocated 25 minutes each week for group exercises and one-to-one interviews. The regular shorter tutorials are well planned and effective. Many students attend more than the minimum requirement of these sessions and speak highly of their friendly, supportive nature. Very few students receive the extra time allocated for tutorial work.

35   In addition to tutorials, there are two review days when students receive feedback on their progress from both subject and personal tutors. The outcomes of reviews are reported to parents twice a year and inform the process of recording achievement. Target setting and action planning are well documented but monitoring the achievement of targets is weak.

36   The college is introducing learning support to help students develop their literacy and numeracy skills. It relies heavily on informal systems and is unsystematic. Students requiring support in developing basic skills in English and numeracy are identified during admissions procedures, but there is no systematic diagnostic testing and not all students take up the opportunity for support. Procedures for referring students for learning support during courses depends on informal contact between members of staff and they are not implemented consistently.   Students are not clear about how they themselves can request additional support. Although support sessions for English and mathematics are timetabled, it is difficult for some students to take advantage of these because of other timetable commitments. There is no central development of resources and no self-study materials are available. The tracking and monitoring of students' progress does not comply with the college's procedures. Although the teachers who offer this service do so in a supportive manner, the perceived lack of status for such support means that students often fail to take advantage of it.

37   Students have access to counselling and other specialist support. There is a college counsellor, a health visitor and a chaplain who students can contact easily and whose support they value highly. A careers officer from the local careers service is available regularly in college. Some students are encouraged to use senior tutors for careers guidance and this sometimes leads to the provision of inconsistent advice.

38   There are efficient procedures to support students who leave their course early. Staff conduct exit interviews and students are contacted again within six months of leaving to check on their destinations. Where appropriate, students are offered a further guidance interview. Students receive excellent support when applying to higher education; this includes visits to university open days and the use of mock application forms.

TEACHING AND THE PROMOTION OF LEARNING

39   Students and staff work well together within a friendly and supportive atmosphere. Teaching and the promotion of learning is of a high standard. In the sessions observed over 80 per cent had more strengths than weaknesses. The following table shows the grades awarded as a result of the inspection.

Teaching sessions: inspection grades by programme of study

Programmes	Grade	1	2	3	4	5	Totals
GCE AS/A level		15	31	10	1	0	57
GCSE		5	5	2	0	0	12
GNVQ		2	14	4	0	0	20
Other		2	3	0	0	0	5
Total		24	53	16	1	0	94

40 The college sets a minimum attendance target of 85 per cent. Half of the courses achieved this during the academic year 1993-94, and three-quarters of courses during the autumn term 1994. Attendance on some courses declines as the year progresses, and there are generally poorer rates of attendance in the summer term.

41 Science courses have comprehensive course documentation. Schemes of work are shared with students and displayed in the science classrooms. Students undertaking modular courses are given documentation which ensures they understand assessment requirements. Science students experience a good standard of teaching. Of the sessions observed, 85 per cent had more strengths than weaknesses. Lessons are well prepared and students experience a variety of teaching methods in most areas of their courses. The understanding of students is regularly checked and written feedback is provided on their progress and achievements. In some theory lessons, students are not given enough opportunity to raise questions or express opinions.

42 In mathematics and computing, 57 per cent of sessions observed had more strengths than weaknesses. All mathematics and computing lessons are well planned and there are good schemes of work which are discussed with students. Efficient records of students' progress are kept and students are regularly informed of their contents. In the better sessions, well-motivated students participate in a wide range of activities. Teachers' presentations are lively, and good use is made of question and answer techniques. In one practical computing session, students worked on an individual basis on their projects; they tackled either real, or realistically simulated problems enthusiastically with effective teacher support. In weaker sessions, the work does not take into account the differing experiences and abilities of the students in the group. During some sessions, particularly in mathematics, students are not sufficiently encouraged to ask questions or to test their own ideas.

43 Design and technology courses are carefully organised and well structured. Students' knowledge and skills are developed through well-planned lessons, assignments and projects. The contents of the programmes are shared with students at the start of the course. Students are set clear targets for achievement, which they and their teachers can measure effectively, and they receive regular feedback on their work. The treatment of technical and theoretical elements of courses is sometimes

too shallow to develop effective understanding. Students' self evaluation of their designs is less critical than it should be and some students are embarking on the manufacturing stage of projects when designs are technically weak.

44   Business courses are coherent and thoroughly planned. Course documents indicate aims and objectives and the use of a variety of teaching methods appropriate to individual subjects. Students' progress is well recorded, especially on GNVQ courses, and regularly reviewed with students who are then set targets for further development. Business studies lessons challenge and extend students and effectively develop their skills, knowledge and understanding. Most teachers take account of the differing abilities of students within a group. They set learning in the context of what has gone before and make clear what it is intended to achieve. Of the sessions observed, 86 per cent had more strengths than weaknesses. Core skills are not a sufficiently integral element of much of the work, and students' workload across subjects is inconsistent in terms of timing and type of assignment.

45   Students of sport studies, physical education and leisure and tourism experience a high standard of teaching and learning. All of the lessons observed had more strengths than weaknesses. Lessons are well structured and conducted at a lively pace. A wide variety of learning styles is used to provide an appropriate balance between teacher-led instruction and student-based learning. In one lesson, a handout covering the main topics of the lesson was explained by the teacher in clear language and illustrated by reference to the students' own contributions, skills and experiences. Students were encouraged to add their own notes to the handout and care was taken to ensure that all students understood the points being made before. Students' contributions are valued and used effectively by teachers. At the end of lessons, teachers summarise the main points to help students' understanding of their achievements. Occasionally, the objectives being covered in sessions are not made clear to students. There is insufficient integration of work experience and work simulation in GNVQ lessons.

46   Core skills, especially the use of information technology, form an integral part of the planning of art and design courses. The programme of study is both vocational and academic, so all students benefit, even if such skills are not assessed as part of their course. Although schemes of work reflect the objectives of art and design courses, the method of delivery, in sequential units, means that learning becomes somewhat compartmentalised, hindering the development of fully-integrated projects.

47   Students in art and design experience a wide variety of teaching and learning methods. Eighty per cent of the sessions observed had more strengths than weaknesses. Students are effectively engaged in their work and appropriately challenged by well-devised tasks. The allocation of three hours per session allows teachers time for detailed work on topics. Good use is made of authentic working situations; for example a group of photography students learned about the theory of portraiture through the imaginative use of a studio set and lighting. Assessment criteria are made clear to students and their work is assessed regularly. Students involved

in the criticism and assessment of each others' work adopt a mature and positive manner. On a few occasions, the work was not demanding enough; for example, students undertaking three-dimensional work on a GNVQ advanced course produced very elementary constructions using wire and cardboard when facilities for more sophisticated work were available.

48   The organisation of courses in humanities is of a high standard. Detailed departmental plans cover curriculum provision, the teaching and learning styles employed, schemes of work, examination syllabuses, homework schedules, marking policies and resources. Lesson plans identify the resources required, learning styles, assessment procedures and allocation of time. Course documentation is shared with students, though the language used is aimed more at teachers than students. Teachers keep registers and record students' achievements efficiently. These practices are exemplary in English. In geography, history and government and politics, students' records of achievement are used for every piece of work and this allows for effective review of students' work and the setting of appropriate learning targets. Lessons are well managed and pitched at an appropriate level. Some timetables for coursework are unrealistic allowing too little time before the deadlines for its submission to the examining board for teachers to take action to support students who have not completed their work.

49   Humanities staff successfully use a variety of teaching strategies. Ninety-six per cent of sessions observed had more strengths than weaknesses. Teaching is energetic and enthusiastic, and takes careful account of the differing abilities of the students. Students have many opportunities for discussion. Students' work is appropriately marked and there is helpful feedback from staff. For example, in geography, history, and government and politics, there is a marking system; teachers make comments in the margins of students' scripts, and these are summarised to identify strengths and weaknesses and point to the areas which students need to address in order to improve their work.

STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENTS

50   The majority of students are well motivated, work conscientiously and are attentive in class. Many show a lively appreciation of, and enthusiasm for their field of study. They work well in small groups, in pairs and individually. They co-operate on extended projects, producing work of a high standard. Students on the GNVQ intermediate art and design programme have produced a large, full-colour mural for the main corridor of the college. Moderators have commented upon the good-quality coursework produced in both English literature and language, and of the commitment of students at all levels to producing thoughtful work.

51   The majority of students are developing skills and understanding of an appropriate level for their course in both oral and written work. Most theatre studies students display sensitivity towards texts they are using and art students have good drawing skills, but the level of skill and knowledge on GNVQ advanced art courses is too low. Not all students extend and challenge themselves; art students are often content to remain within a safe, traditional art environment, and some sports studies students appear content to achieve skills consistent with the performance criteria.

52   Students are given opportunities to develop core skills such as literacy, numeracy, use of information technology and problem solving. However, students' achievements in these areas vary across the college. The use of information technology is well developed in mathematics, design and technology, sports studies, art, and media studies, but it is not adequately covered in science, GNVQ leisure and tourism, and humanities subjects. Science and business studies students are developing appropriate numeracy skills to support their courses. Some students demonstrate good communication skills by producing well-structured and well-presented projects and assignments; for example, in GCE A level sports studies and in design and technology courses. Business studies, history and geography students have good opportunities to develop problem-solving skills. Much of students' work is well written although this is less true in English, an area where students should have particular strengths in such skills.

53   Practical work is carried out competently and safely. In science, safety is a high priority. GCE A level science students are encouraged to carry out their own risk assessments in practical lessons. Design and technology students use a range of materials to shape, form and join, and they carry out these processes systematically and safely.

54   Students aged 16-18 entered for GCE AS/A level examinations in 1994 scored, on average, 4.0 points per entry (where A=10, E=2). This places the college among the middle third of colleges in the further education sector on this performance measure, based on the data in the 1994 performance tables published by the Department for Education. The average point score per candidate attempting two or more GCE A levels (or the AS equivalent) in 1994 was 13.0. In chemistry, mathematics, further mathematics, art, and Christian theology, there was a 100 per cent pass rate. It is the third year in succession that all students have achieved a pass in Christian theology. Of the 81 students who entered for general studies, 88 per cent passed which is 10 per cent more than the provisional average for sixth form colleges in 1994. Pass rates in biology, computing, design and technology, theatre studies, psychology, geography, history, and British government, are all less than the provisional average rates for sixth form colleges; markedly so in design and technology, history and British government. Other subjects have pass rates which are in line with or better than the national average rates for those subjects. Although some subjects, such as mathematics and further mathematics, show an improving trend over recent years, others, such as geography, history and British government, do not.

55   There is a smaller entry for GCE AS examinations. Seventy-two candidates took the examination in 1994, and results were consistently good. Of the eight subjects, only mathematics was below the provisional average pass rate for sixth form colleges. Students taking British government achieved a particularly good pass rate of 91 per cent.

56   The college carries out its own analysis to measure the value added to students' qualifications while at college, by comparing their examination results with their qualifications on entry. Students' qualifications on entry have declined over time. In 1993, 56.8 per cent of students taking GCE A

level or AS subjects, entered the college with five or more GCSE A-C grades; in 1994 this proportion decreased to 42 per cent. This difference is reflected in the outcomes of students on GCE A level courses; 96 per cent of those with a GCSE score of over 28 points passed, while only 56 per cent of those with a GCSE score of between 8 and 14 points passed.

57   The college also conducts an analysis of performance by subject using the Advanced Level Information System. It shows that, in 1994, in 44 per cent of the subjects offered, students overall obtained higher grades at GCE A level than would have been predicted by their entry qualifications; notably so in chemistry and mathematics. In a further 11 per cent of subjects, they obtained results in line with predictions. However, in 37 per cent of subjects students obtained results at least half a grade below predictions based on their entry qualifications. In half of the GCE AS courses, students obtained results which were the same as or better than the predicted grades.

58   In 1994, the pass rates at grades A-C on half of the 28 GCSE subjects for which students were entered were below the national average pass rates for the sector; and in over a quarter of the subjects, they were well below. None of the four home economics students achieved grades A-C in 1994. A small number of entrants in French and German, six in total, all achieved A-C grades.

59   In 1994, 70 per cent of students on GNVQ courses obtained at least part of the qualification, and 48 per cent gained a full award. Levels of achievement on GNVQ intermediate courses varied. In art and design, results were good; 91 per cent of students gained at least part of an award and 72 per cent achieved the full award. Pass rates were lower on other intermediate courses; only 33 per cent of students on business programmes gained a full award. On the foundation programmes, 64 per cent of students gained at least part of the award, but only 36 per cent achieved a full award.

60   Many students leave the college without completing their courses. The completion rate for the college in 1994 was 73 per cent against a provisional completion rate for sixth form colleges nationally of 94 per cent. Over a third of GCE A level courses and over two-thirds of GCSE courses failed to achieve a 70 per cent completion rate. All GNVQ intermediate courses had a completion rate of over 70 per cent; in art and design this reached 85 per cent. The completion rate for GNVQ foundation programmes is low, at 42 per cent.

61   In 1994, 41 per cent of students following GCE A level courses went on to higher education. Seventeen per cent of GCE A level students remained in further education and 12 per cent obtained employment. Sixty-two per cent of GCSE students continued in further education, the vast majority staying at the college. Out of 35 GNVQ candidates, 29 stayed on in further education, all but one in the college. One entered employment.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

62   The effectiveness of quality assurance procedures varies throughout the college.   Other than the review of examination results, there is no college-wide system for quality assurance. Responsibility for monitoring quality across the college is shared between senior managers, all of whom have a general reference to it in their job descriptions.   Though improvements are planned, there is a lack of clarity about arrangements for monitoring the implementation of cross-college policies and systems, and about the action to be taken at college level in response to the outcomes of quality monitoring.

63   Detailed implementation and monitoring of the quality of subject and course provision is the responsibility of individual heads of departments who differ in the approaches they use. The regular overall review of provision is not a formal requirement within departments' quality assurance systems. However, course and subject reviews frequently inform the departments' annual development plans. In addition, heads of departments meet with the vice-principal (curriculum) during each academic session to review the current provision and to plan provision for the forthcoming session. Many aspects of this process are carried out on an informal basis. There is some limited use of performance indicators but this is not systematic. Very few departments set targets and monitor progress against them.

64   Examination results are reviewed annually by the principal and vice-principal (curriculum) in conjunction with each head of department. Issues for action to be taken forward by the department are agreed. Progress on implementing agreed action is not systematically monitored.

65   Central to all departments' quality monitoring procedures is the use of questionnaires through which they seek regular feedback from students. Practice in the construction and analysis of questionnaires varies widely across departments and so, consequently, does the reliability of the feedback obtained. There is insufficient sharing of good practice in the construction, use and analysis of questionnaires. Students welcome the level of feedback they are encouraged and able to make. They particularly value the opportunity to give their views on general issues, using a suggestion box located in the library. Action taken in response to students' requests and suggestions is published in the college bulletin. There is little feedback to students on the outcomes of the questionnaires they have completed.

66   The college has successfully introduced the pilot phase of a staff-appraisal scheme and this has informed the extension of the scheme to all staff during 1995. There is a formal system for staff development. All teachers have a minimum of five in-service training days, two of which are allocated to college matters and the remaining three to training courses of their choice. Until very recently, most staff-development activities have reflected individual requirements only and have been insufficiently linked to institutional plans. Teachers involved in GNVQ developments have access to training accredited by the Training and Development Lead Body. Currently, 12 staff are accredited as assessors, one as internal verifier. Ten staff are progressing to accreditation, six of them as internal verifiers.

67   College staff are generally aware of the National Charter for Further Education and of its implications. The college charter forms part of a student handbook and all students receive a copy of this. In addition, the learning agreement, which all students sign, sets out many of the standards in the charter. Although students are aware of the college charter, many have not had the opportunity to discuss its implications, and their understanding of these is limited.

68   The college's self-assessment report is written to the headings in Council Circular 93/28, *Assessing Achievement*. It consists largely of descriptive statements with little evaluative comment. Although it gives a few exemplars to support statements, there is no cross referencing to supporting documentation. It did not make a significant contribution to the inspection process.

RESOURCES

Staffing

69   The college employs 52 teachers, 47 full time and five part time, almost all of whom are appropriately qualified in the subjects they teach; 88 per cent have first degrees, 16 per cent have higher degrees and 94 per cent have a teaching qualification. Most staff have relevant specialist teaching skills and some have industrial experience. In a few cases, specialist skills are not matched directly to provision. Staff are well informed about trends and issues in the further education sector. The student:staff ratio is currently 12:1.

70   Levels of technical support are adequate for most courses. There are three qualified and experienced science technicians who are undergoing retraining in order to provide support for the areas of design and technology and information technology, both of which are currently under supported. All staff enjoy a good level of clerical support.   The teaching staff have exclusive use of a secretary who is based in one of the staff rooms. Students' general enquiries are dealt with effectively by a student support officer. Although there is a part-time library supervisor, there is no qualified librarian.

Equipment/learning resources

71   Teachers have access to a wide range of teaching and learning aids, such as video players and overhead projectors. Facilities are available for good-quality learning materials to be produced in-house, though not all staff take advantage of this. Some areas have inadequate specialist equipment to meet the needs of the curriculum. In sports studies, and leisure and tourism, much of the equipment is ageing.

72   The college's ratio of computer workstations to students is 1:4.5, which is good. However, almost half of the computers are not capable of supporting the latest versions of software. The workstations are situated in the computer studies room, library, science resource area and some classrooms. There are up-to-date information technology resources in the art and design area, including a high-quality computer used for desktop

publishing. A compact disk read-only memory (CD-ROM) database machine situated in the science resource room has insufficient memory to support relevant software.

73   The library is inadequate to meet the needs of most students. The majority of the relevant subject texts are kept within the departments and are largely inaccessible to the students. The library has no central record of these books. There are several computers in the library, one of which has a CD-ROM capability although there is no library-based software to support it. The range of relevant periodicals and newspapers is adequate, but that of reference materials is less so. Poor security measures in the library have resulted in the loss of books worth several hundred pounds during the last year.

74   Systems are in place for the efficient purchasing of equipment and other resources. The college assembles many of its own computers, and this results in significant savings. There are annual maintenance contracts on most large items of equipment and machines such as photocopiers, and this minimises the time the machines are out of commission. Other equipment is repaired as needed, and the maintenance and distribution of the audio-visual aids is well managed.

Accommodation

75   The college environment is generally pleasant. Corridors and classrooms are clean and tidy. Most of the specialist accommodation is appropriately furnished, well decorated and provides a stimulating learning environment. A programme of redecoration and reflooring, linked to the relocation of several programme areas, is nearing completion. Almost all the classrooms are suitable in size and layout for the programmes offered. Some departments have interesting and relevant wall displays. Posters in the science laboratories encourage women to study the sciences and to work in science-related occupations. The college gymnasium does not reflect industrial standards and practice.

76   There is an over-capacity of student work places and teaching areas. Currently there are 1,020 places and 603 students. Although a science resource room has been established, there are few other examples where this excess space is used positively.

77   The pleasant 166-seat cafeteria is open throughout the college day and provides a welcoming social area, together with a good-quality catering provision. Each day's menu is based on a theme, such as 'Chinese Day'. There are two student common rooms and a smaller open-plan area with tables and chairs for students' use. Both common rooms and the cafeteria have televisions. The 25-metre swimming pool is used by sports studies and leisure and tourism students, and is open to other students and staff at publicised times. The pool and gymnasium are let out for a fee to external users whenever possible.

78   Other student facilities are of variable quality. The library is spacious, with adequate seating but it is sometimes uncomfortably cold. There are few other areas where private study is possible. Most areas in college are inaccessible for students and staff who have impaired mobility.

CONCLUSIONS AND ISSUES

79   The strengths of the college are:

• the governors' commitment and contribution to the strategic guidance of the college

• effective liaison with local schools

• rapid progress in developing effective marketing procedures

• good communication systems

• well-organised recruitment procedures

• a good range of opportunities for students to express their views

• excellent support for students applying to higher education

• consistently high standards of teaching

• a good standard of accommodation providing a stimulating learning environment.

80   If the college is to make progress in achieving its major aims, it should address the following issues:

• the weak links with local business

• the limited collaboration and sharing of good practice between departments

• the poor implementation and monitoring of cross-college policies and systems

• the limited use of performance indicators to inform planning and decision making

• poor access to learning support for students with basic-skill support needs

• the variation in the effectiveness of quality assurance by departments

• poor retention rates

• poor examination results in GCSE subjects and in some GCE A level subjects

• inadequate library and library services.

FIGURES

Note: the information contained in the figures was provided by the college to the inspection team.
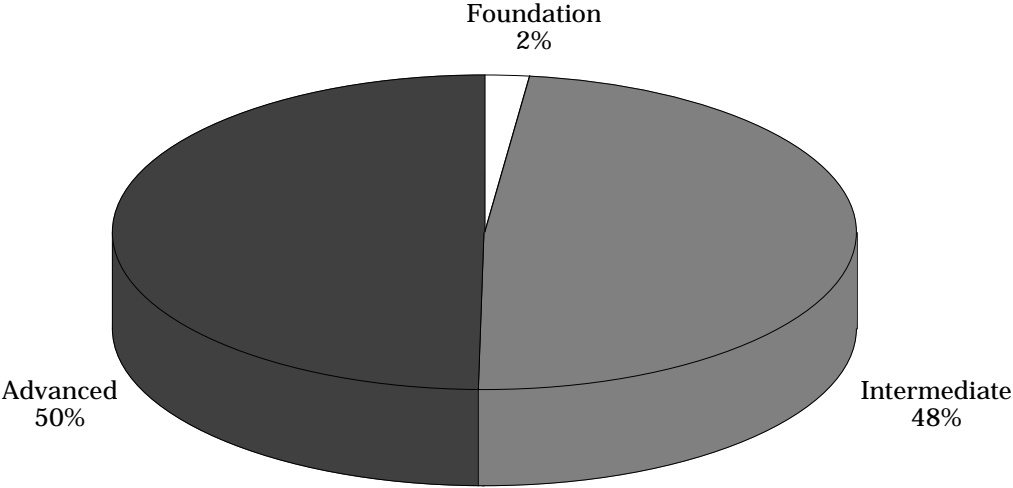
Figure 1

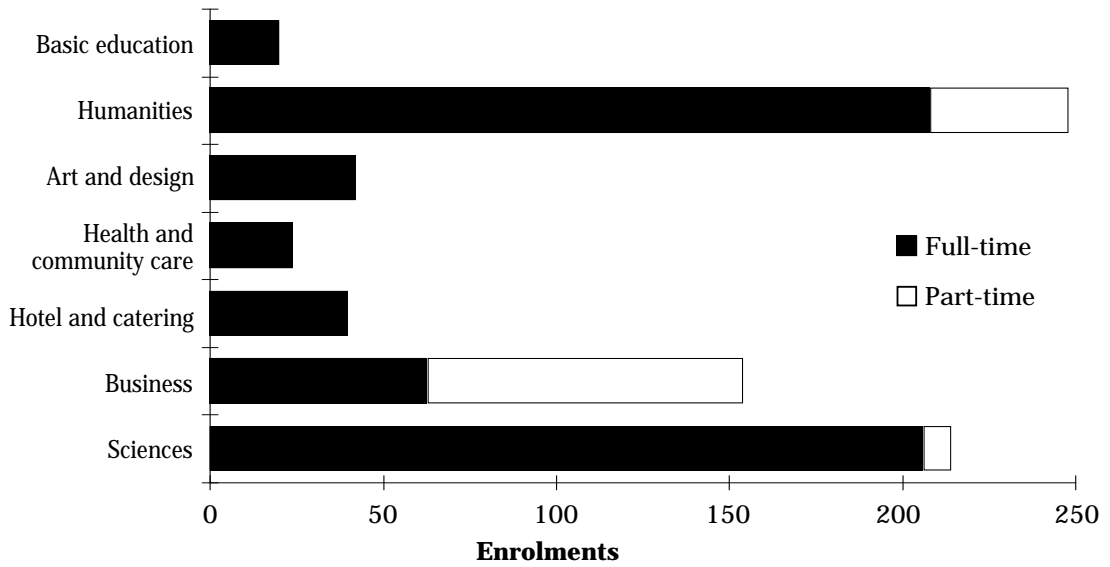**Pendleton College: percentage enrolments by age (1994-95)**
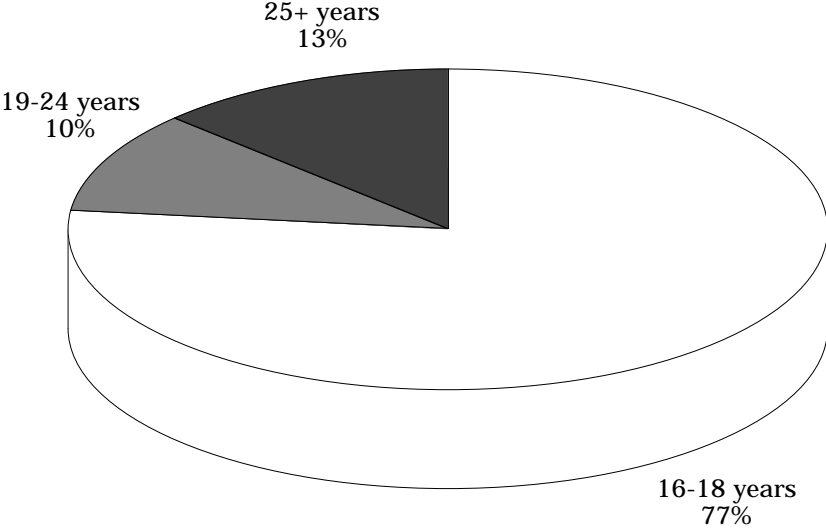
Enrolments: 742

Figure 2

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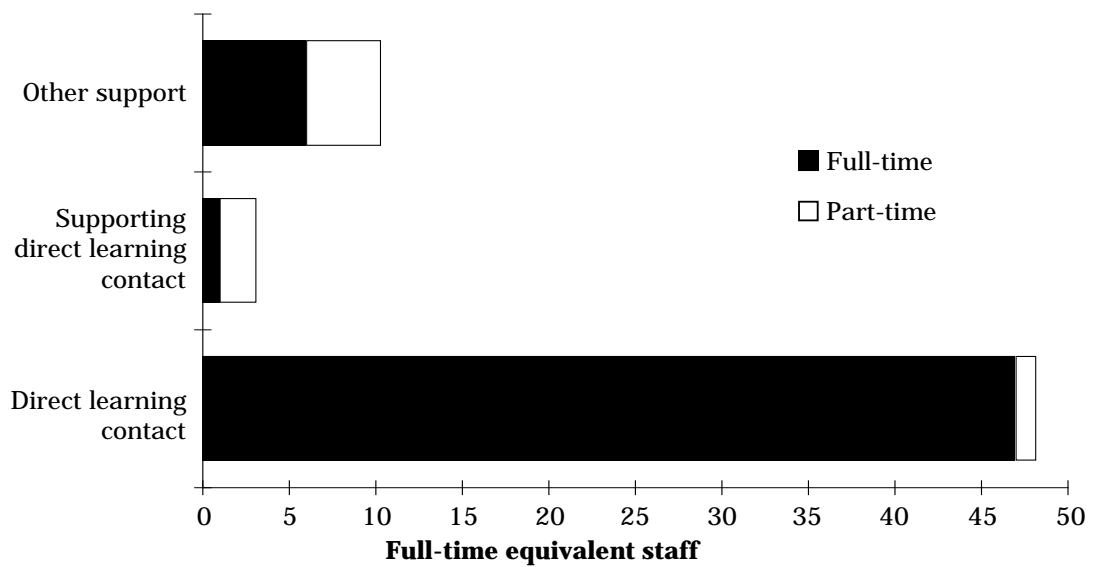

Enrolments: 742

Figure 3

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

Enrolments: 742
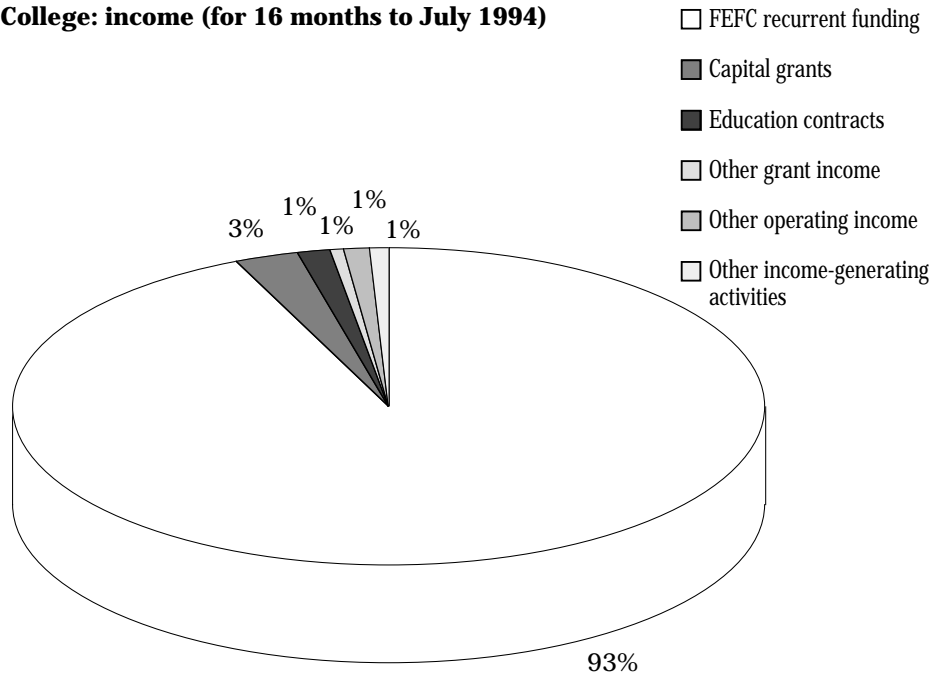
Figure 4

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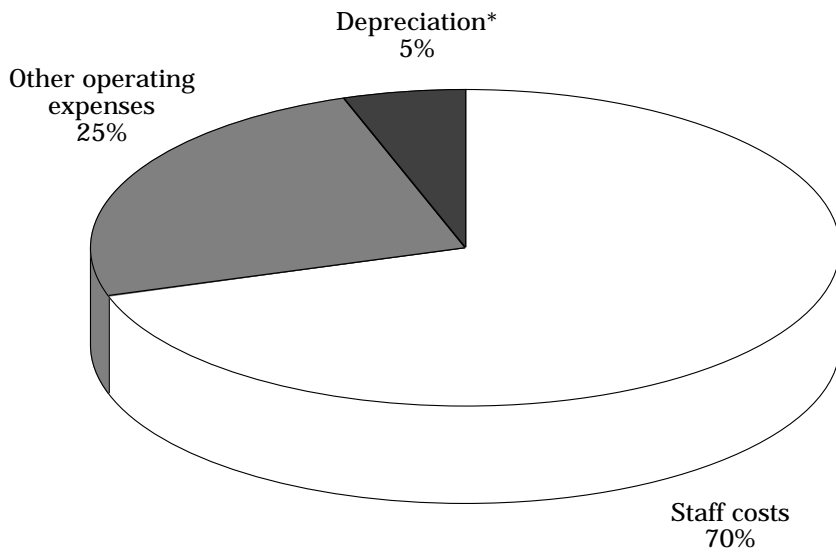

Full-time equivalent staff: 62

Figure 5

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

☐ FEFC recurrent funding

◼ Capital grants

◼ Education contracts

☐ Other grant income

☐ Other operating income

☐ Other income-generating
    activities

3% 1% 1%
    1%   1%

93%

Income: £3,136,595

Figure 6

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

Depreciation*
5%

Other operating
expenses
25%

Staff costs
70%

Expenditure: £3,121,167   *excluding building depreciation.*