

**REPORT  
FROM THE  
INSPECTORATE**

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# **Macclesfield College**

**January 1994**

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**THE  
FURTHER  
EDUCATION  
FUNDING  
COUNCIL**

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**THE FURTHER EDUCATION  
FUNDING COUNCIL**

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

**GRADE DESCRIPTORS**

*The procedures for assessing quality are given in FEFC Circular 93/28. In the course of inspecting colleges, inspectors are expected to assess the strengths and weaknesses of each aspect of provision they inspect. Their assessments are set out clearly in their reports. Inspectors also summarise their judgements on the balance between strengths and weaknesses using a five-point scale. Each grade on the scale has the following descriptor:*

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

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# FEFC INSPECTION REPORT 05/94

## MACCLESFIELD COLLEGE OF FURTHER EDUCATION

### NORTH WEST REGION

Inspected October-November 1993

#### Summary

Macclesfield College, Cheshire is a major provider of further education for east Cheshire. It is responsive to the needs of local industry and the local community and has developed a wide range of full-time and part-time programmes. A particular strength is the thoroughness of the college's strategic planning, to which the governors have made a major contribution. Teachers strive to meet the varied needs of students, many of whom have relatively low achievements on entry to college. The efforts of teachers and students, complemented by strong guidance and support arrangements, are not always reflected in students' achievements in external examinations, which are often modest. In order to assess more accurately the achievements of its students the college should develop the means to measure the value added to individual students' levels of achievement as a result of their studies at the college. Teachers are well-qualified. Many of them have recent and relevant industrial experience. The computer-based management information system has significant limitations and is not yet capable of meeting management needs. Quality assurance is at an early stage of development. There is a sound framework for course evaluation and review but, in practice, course teams operate review procedures with varying degrees of effectiveness. Other weaknesses are the management of staff development; the quality of library provision and of students' access to information technology; and the links between GCE and GCSE courses and vocational courses where both form part of an individual student's programme of study.

The grades awarded to aspects of cross-college provision and curriculum areas 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	3
Students' recruitment, guidance and support	2
Quality assurance	3
Resources	3

<b>Curriculum area</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Curriculum area</b>	<b>Grade</b>
Business and administration	2	Science and mathematics	3
Engineering and technology	2	Catering and care	3
Humanities	2	Art and design	3

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## **INTRODUCTION**

1 Macclesfield College of Further Education, Cheshire, was inspected in two stages during October and November 1993. A total of 55 inspector days were used for the inspection of specialist subject areas during the period 18 October - 3 November. Aspects of cross-college provision were subsequently inspected by a team of nine inspectors who spent 45 inspector days in the college from 8-12 November. Inspectors visited 150 classes, examined representative samples of students' work and held discussions with governors, staff, students, local employers, representatives of the local training and enterprise council, a headteacher and careers service staff.

2 The report is based on inspections carried out according to the framework and guidelines described in Council Circular 93/28. The framework describes a four-year inspection cycle. When this cycle becomes fully established colleges will have the opportunity to respond to the findings of earlier inspection visits before their quadrennial inspections and the subsequent published report. As the inspection of the college occurred early in the cycle, the opportunity for such a response has not been available.

## **THE COLLEGE AND ITS AIMS**

3 Macclesfield College is a medium-size general further education college. Its main buildings were purpose-built in the 1960s on the Park Lane site on the outskirts of Macclesfield. It also occupies older buildings on a town-centre site at Park Green. At the time of inspection there were approximately 4,346 full-time and part-time enrolments, and a further 5,000 adult education enrolments. The enrolments included 814 full-time students and 400 students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities most of whom were following discrete specialist courses. Enrolments by age and mode of study, excluding adult education, are shown in figures 1 and 2. The college has a full-time equivalent staff establishment of 118 teachers and 52 support staff: 93 teachers and 32 support staff have full-time posts (figure 3). There are courses in business and administration, engineering and technology, humanities, science and mathematics, art and design, and in care, leisure and catering. The work is organised within four teaching departments: business and European studies, creative and community studies, general studies, and technology. Enrolments by programme area are shown in figure 4.

4 The college's main catchment area is the district of Macclesfield which has a population of approximately 140,000. A substantial number of full-time students are also attracted from Congleton, nine miles away. The district is predominantly affluent and has a relatively low unemployment rate. A high proportion of the work force is employed in the financial services industries, many commuting to Stockport and Manchester. During

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1992-93, 76 per cent of the 16 year olds in Macclesfield stayed on in full-time education.

5 There are eight 11-18 schools in the Macclesfield district. Until recently, most of these concentrated on the provision of General Certificate of Education advanced level (GCE A level) courses, but since the late 1980s there have been various initiatives to develop vocational provision up to the intermediate level of General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQs) or its equivalent. The college has worked with two of the local schools to develop joint provision but conflicting objectives have prevented any serious long-term planning. The numbers of students from Macclesfield attending the South Cheshire and Mid-Cheshire colleges have substantially reduced as Macclesfield College has widened its course provision. Stockport College attracts some students from the north of the district for courses in construction and motor vehicle engineering which are currently not provided at Macclesfield.

6 The college's mission is to provide excellent quality of education and training for people of all ages in a caring, accessible environment and to offer services which are responsive to the needs of individuals and the community as a whole. Specific targets for 1993-94 include increased enrolments, the extension of GNVQ provision, the strengthening of core skills in GCE and General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) programmes, and developing the range and flexibility of access provision.

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

7 The college has a wide range of programmes which includes: full-time and part-time GCE A level and GCSE courses; courses in most vocational areas; adult education, of which just over 30 per cent is funded by the FEFC; and provision for students with learning disabilities and disabilities both on specialist courses and, with support, on mainstream courses.

8 The college has exceeded its targets for all modes of provision except evening classes, putting it within 5 per cent of its enrolment forecast. The college is currently examining the reasons for the shortfall, which is predominantly in the recruitment of adult students.

9 The college does not offer courses in construction and motor vehicle engineering and there is some constraint on the type of engineering which can be studied because of the college's specialist focus on aerospace and electronic engineering. It is also the case that students wishing to study vocational courses at the introductory level have a limited choice. However, the general availability of courses is enhanced by the wide variety of modes of attendance offered to potential students and there are good opportunities for students to mix vocational courses with GCE or GCSE courses. The college has an efficient short-course unit providing a variety of courses tailored to local needs. Over the last three years, income from this unit

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has risen significantly and it makes an important contribution to the college's gross budget.

10 There is well-designed provision for mature students and those wishing to return to study. A wide range of courses includes some which lead to nationally- recognised qualifications.

11 The college's image within the local community is good. There are effective links with local employers, the South and East Cheshire Training and Enterprise Council (TEC), higher education institutions and community representatives. Good relationships with the TEC have led to effective joint working in training credits, teacher placements, action planning for students and involvement in the 'one stop shop'. The college has responded positively to opportunities to liaise with local schools although the effectiveness of school links is influenced markedly by the competitive market for post-16 students in Macclesfield. Links with employers are numerous but not always fully exploited. Some sections of the college rely heavily on their contacts with a small number of employers. There is a good level of co-operation with community agencies over the provision of courses for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

12 In vocational areas, the college has effective systems for identifying local employer and community needs. An appropriate analysis has also been undertaken of the needs of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The extensive provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is a positive feature of the college's work.

13 The college provides a comprehensive range of information about its courses. Most printed materials are presented clearly and the language used is appropriate. Information is distributed widely. There is regular coverage of college activities and course developments in the local media. The relative effectiveness of these different publicity outlets is not monitored.

14 The college has a policy and code of practice on equal opportunities but there appears to be little awareness of it at departmental level. The small numbers of students from ethnic minorities reflect the small numbers in the population as a whole. An appropriate range of courses is offered for students whose first language is not English. Recruitment to courses continues to reflect traditional gender biases. Hours of attendance for some courses do not take into account the problems of prospective students who have to care for their children.

15 The senior management team is aware of and responds to national aims and policies for further education. Other staff have a very limited awareness of current policies. Only a small proportion of staff understands the developments occurring with GNVQs and National Vocational Qualification (NVQs) and this is restricting the spread of these qualifications to relevant areas of work.

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## **GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT**

16 The governors have a clear perception of their role. They are involved in strategic planning but have refrained from close involvement with the day-to-day activities of the college. Following incorporation, clear decisions were taken about the priorities in the work programme for the governors and these are reflected in the size and membership of the governing body. There are 13 governors including the principal, a college teacher and a member of the college support staff. Of the other ten, five are, or were formerly, in senior posts in industry or commerce; one represents the Macclesfield Chamber of trade, one is the chief executive of the South East Cheshire Training and Enterprise Council, and one an assistant director at Manchester Metropolitan University. Currently there are two vacancies. Sub-committees are few in number but they function effectively.

17 Many staff are not aware of the range of the governors' work: minutes are available but not circulated within the college. Less than one third of the eligible teaching staff voted in the recent election to fill the vacancy for the staff member of the governing body. The governors have not yet established procedures for monitoring the performance of the college and their own effectiveness. Some governors have attended training courses but there is no induction process in place for new governors.

18 The college has refined effectively its strategic planning. All members of the senior management team participate fully in the development of the plan and appropriate external groups contribute to the process. The current strategic plan is coherent, comprehensive and includes a statement of planning assumptions. It contains an analysis of local market needs and references to relevant national initiatives.

19 The operating statements for departments and directorates have detailed objectives and senior managers' responsibilities are clearly allocated. The action lists in the statements are reviewed annually by the chief executive, directors and heads of department. A complete record of the outcomes is held on file. While heads of department are fully conversant with, and support the strategic plan, many staff in senior positions in departments do not appreciate the implications of the plan for their area of work. There are inadequate formal arrangements to oversee the implementation of policy within departments and the effectiveness of communication within the departments varies considerably. Whilst there are some close and productive links based on programme teams, some of the subject sections within departments work in isolation with insufficient support. The forward planning of the art and design section is clearly linked to the departmental operating statement. In the English, mathematics, science and care sections planning is far less systematic.



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20 The re-structuring of management, implemented 18 months ago, was based on a realistic assessment of strengths and weaknesses, changing needs and external factors. The process took a considerable time and slowed the development of several cross-college initiatives. The senior management group has developed into a cohesive, mutually-supportive team and the three directors have provided an effective focus for policy development, encompassing all major areas with the exception of environmental policy.

21 Much has been achieved in the management restructuring, but the resolution of conflicting corporate and departmental needs has not been entirely successful. The directorates have put considerable effort into developing productive partnerships with the departments but the internal organisation of departments does not always relate effectively to cross-college initiatives. Strong departmental loyalties and traditions do not easily align with some institutional priorities. Lack of clarity about the relative responsibilities of heads of department and directors has affected adversely the monitoring and implementation of these initiatives.

22 The college's gross budget for 1993-94 includes approximately 30 per cent of income from sources other than the FEFC. The college's recurrent income and estimated expenditure for 1993-94 are shown in figures 5 and 6. In 1992-93 the college's unit of funding for each full-time equivalent student was £2,064 which placed it in the lowest 20 per cent of further education institutions nationwide.

23 There is an appropriate strategy for allocating recurrent funds to budget holders. The system was introduced two years ago. It does not reflect fully the needs of those sections with higher costs but it is regarded by heads of department as open and equitable. Expenditure is closely monitored centrally.

24 Staffing levels are based on an analysis of academic departments' student target numbers. By allocating part-time hours in this way the college is able to respond with reasonable flexibility to changing demand. Lack of suitable part-time specialist staff in some subjects limits the effectiveness of this strategy.

25 The allocation of funding for equipment is linked effectively to the priorities identified in the strategic plan. Funds have been targeted successfully on specific areas following full debate by senior management. Control of some of the physical resources by academic departments, for example information technology and general teaching rooms, reduces their optimum use.

26 The college is clear about the need to carry out efficiency comparisons and priority is being given to developing a finance system which can provide reliable data. Currently, there is insufficient information available to calculate costs on other than a broad level.

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27 There are significant limitations to the computer-based management information system. Much progress has been made in the last eighteen months but the system is not yet capable of meeting management needs. The level of staffing for operating the management information system unit is inadequate. Although senior managers are beginning to use basic outputs from the system they are not being used by other staff in the evaluation of courses.

28 The college sets enrolment targets for academic departments with sufficient flexibility for heads of department to adjust course numbers within their overall target. This year, the enrolment process was monitored closely using the computerised management information system. The central system for calculating student retention rates is ineffective: information is unreliable and often out-of-date. Although heads of department monitor closely the numbers of early leavers on their courses, the arrangements are too informal to be effective.

29 The college maintains a complete central record of student destinations. Appropriate use is made of this information for strategic planning but the data is not always reviewed systematically by course teams as part of the evaluation process.

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

30 Pre-enrolment guidance is good. Potential students have extensive opportunities to consult well-qualified staff about vocational and non-vocational courses. In most cases, admissions tutors make full use of information relating to the students' experience, including records of achievement. The induction process is guided by a clear framework. New students are provided with a good introduction to the college and to their courses. In a few instances, tutors are not fully aware of their role in the induction process. The procedures for transfer between programmes in the early stages after induction are not always adequate.

31 The college does not have a policy for the assessment and accreditation of prior learning and experience. Teams in some vocational areas are developing procedures of their own. Business administration, for example, already has an effective scheme in place. The college has developed procedures for analysing the needs of adult students so as to prepare appropriate individual learning programmes for them. This year, for the first time, potentially useful screening tests have been used with a range of other students, including those on courses leading to GNVQs.

32 The student services unit is well managed and offers a wide range of appropriate services including careers education and guidance. Close and effective links with the careers service ensure that students have direct access to relevant, up-to-date information. Detailed monitoring of students' use of the unit has enabled their individual needs to be more clearly defined. This has led to the recent appointment of a professional

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counsellor. The student services unit has put considerable effort into developing effective links with personal and course tutors but some subject sections have little contact with it and some personal tutors are not fully aware of the benefits their students could derive from the unit.

33 All full-time students have access to their tutors in timetabled tutorials. Some tutors make effective use of tutorial time to develop individual action plans, record achievements and advise students on future careers. Students are encouraged to maintain personal records of achievement. The arrangements for supporting part-time students are less structured but individual tutors offer effective and appropriate guidance to their students and make full use of the student services unit. The college has recently produced helpful guidance notes to support those tutors who feel insufficiently briefed.

34 There is no reliable central arrangement to monitor poor attendance. Some heads of department monitor attendance closely but the arrangements are too informal and too slow to be effective in dealing with students who give cause for concern. In contrast, the attendance of students with special needs are monitored carefully.

35 The college has developed a student 'compact' in which the rights and responsibilities of students are specified. Few staff and few students understand the obligations of this agreement. As a result it is of little value. Formal mechanisms for consulting students are generally underdeveloped.

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

36 The following table summarises the grades given to the teaching sessions inspected.

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

<b>Programme</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>Totals</b>
A/AS Level		4	10	14	4	0	32
GCSE		0	2	5	3	0	10
GNVQ		0	8	6	8	2	24
NVQ		1	4	9	1	0	15
Other		18	25	25	1	0	69
Total	23	49	59	17	2	150	

37 Teachers strive to meet the needs of students, many of whom have relatively low levels of achievement when they enter college. In the better teaching sessions students' knowledge and understanding were challenged and extended. Teachers adopted a variety of approaches including addressing the whole class and organising individual and group activities. Classroom-based work and practical activities provided stimulating

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experiences which encouraged students' personal, academic and vocational development. The practical work in catering encouraged students to develop professional standards and students in engineering were constantly referred to examples of good industrial practice. Teaching and learning aids were used effectively to support learning.

38 Lessons were planned carefully and generally linked well to the overall aims and objectives of courses. Some English and specialist computing lessons provided excellent examples of how working to precise objectives can accelerate learning. A number of teachers, including those on part-time contracts, had developed comprehensive lesson plans and related high-quality handouts, worksheets and other course materials, based on their careful interpretation of course syllabuses. In some engineering and business studies classes too much time was devoted to note dictation. Such teaching styles often led students to adopt a passive role.

39 The needs of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities on discrete courses are assessed carefully. Teaching is planned well to meet these needs. Sessions have appropriate content and pace and provide suitable challenges to students. Teachers and care assistants are sensitive to the academic, physical and emotional needs of individual students. Care assistants are deployed effectively and provide good support to students and teachers. In mainstream courses, the experience of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is less satisfactory. Teachers do not take sufficient account in their teaching strategies of what these students require. In some instances, they showed a limited understanding of how effective learning could be developed.

40 Teachers set work regularly. It is of an appropriate standard to extend students' knowledge and is sometimes completed during class sessions when teachers can explain what is required and if necessary provide guidance for individual students. Teachers are careful and fair in their marking and a good proportion of marked work gives the students guidance on their strengths and the areas where improvements are possible.

41 In the majority of programme areas, teachers have devised coherent schemes of work. Exceptions include some elements of GNVQ courses. The documentation for computing and social studies is comprehensive and demonstrates how the various elements of the course are to be integrated. In general, students are adequately informed about the aims and requirements of their current assignments and workloads. They are sometimes less well informed about the overall requirements of their courses. In adult basic education courses and teacher training courses, where tutors and their students have devised individual learning contracts, programmes of study are tailored closely to the needs of students.

42 The structure of the college's programmes leading to GNVQ is being developed in accordance with the requirements of the Business and

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Technology Education Council. Some features of these programmes are unsatisfactory, including the assessment framework, methods of delivery, the integration of communication, number and information technology skills, and the associated staff development programme.

43 On GCE and GCSE courses there is no systematic analysis of students' needs in order to develop their skills in communication, numeracy, modern foreign languages and information technology. The coherence of these programmes is heavily dependent on the effectiveness of the personal tutorial programme and it is not always achieved.

44 The college recognises the importance of students gaining experience of information technology. Specific information technology modules, provided by specialist computing teachers, form an additional feature of many courses. The applied design work in graphic design provides a good example of information technology becoming an integral part of the course. In other areas of work, obvious opportunities for using information technology are being missed.

45 Teachers and course leaders keep effective records of their students' achievements in coursework, assignments and external examinations. Most course leaders also maintain good overall records of the background of students and their progress in courses. Records are used by teachers to plan and develop class and coursework activities and the overall direction and pace of students' work. In some programme areas, notably GCE and GCSE, there are gaps in communication between subject and personal tutors which hinder the identification of individual students' support needs and the delivery of appropriate remedial action.

46 The co-ordination of vocational courses with GCE/GCSE courses, where both form part of an individual student's programme, is generally ineffective. Students find it difficult to adjust to the different styles of teaching in the two areas of work and there is little attempt by teachers to establish meaningful links between the academic and the vocational. A consequence is that many students whose programmes bridge the two areas exhibit a low level of motivation in their academic studies which is subsequently reflected in poor performance in examinations.

#### **STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENTS**

47 In all programme areas, the relationships between teachers and students are exceptionally good. Students speak positively of their experience at the college and of the value and vocational relevance of the qualifications for which they are studying.

48 Students' achievements are highest in social studies, engineering and technology and adult basic education.

49 Many students demonstrate a strong commitment to their chosen areas of study and this is often reflected positively in the quality of work they produce. In most programme areas they respond well to in-course

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assessments. Coursework, project work and responses to assessment tests are usually of an appropriate standard, indicating that students have a good understanding of their chosen area of study. The most able students write in an interesting, imaginative and lively manner. In general, students have a good grasp of the course material and are able to use it to good effect in their studies. Most practical work inspected was carried out competently and safely.

50 Some students, particularly those on courses leading to GCSE examinations, have difficulty in organising and developing their ideas, in understanding written material and in writing down their thoughts clearly and correctly. Although some improve significantly during their course, particularly in the written expression of their ideas, others make little or no progress.

51 Students, on vocational courses are developing good communication, mathematical and information technology skills. Adults on the college's access course, which leads to a nationally-recognised qualification, are also being given excellent opportunities to develop appropriate study skills to prepare them for appropriate courses in higher education. Other students have few opportunities to enhance these skills within their learning programmes.

52 The results obtained by the college's students in external examinations are generally modest, a notable exception being the number of high grades in A level examination attained by part-time and open-learning students. The college should develop value-added measures to ensure that the good job it does with many of the students is recognised.

53 In contrast to most other colleges, Macclesfield College presents its GCE and GCSE percentage pass rates in terms of the numbers enrolled on courses, not in terms of the students who were entered for examination. In 1993, over 75 per cent of those enrolled gained grades A-E in each of seven of the A level subjects offered. Results in some of the other A level subjects fell well below this standard. Overall, the 58 students entered for two or more A levels gained an average score of 8.2 (where grade A=10, grade E=2). In both GCE and GCSE courses, the general levels of performance were affected by the consistently poor results of students combining GCSE or GCE studies with vocational studies. Despite achieving modest examination grades, the majority of full-time A level students succeed in gaining entry to higher education.

54 With few exceptions, mature students and part-time students on vocational courses achieve satisfactory or good results. Overall, students on 30 of the 54 vocational courses offered by the college achieved pass rates of 75 per cent or more. Results are poor in some courses leading to the Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) first diploma and to NVQs. A recent table published by the Department for Education shows 75 per cent of students on the final year of study for BTEC national or City

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and Guilds of London Institute (CGLI) national diploma achieved their qualifications. This places the college in the lower half of institutions within the sector.

### **QUALITY ASSURANCE**

55 The senior management team is aware of the commitments in the Charter for Further Education but, at the time of the inspection, its publication was too recent for it to be reflected in the college's strategic plan and operational statement.

56 Arrangements for overall quality assurance are at an early stage of development. The strategic plan states clearly the college's commitment to developing an effective system of quality assurance. Implementation has been cautious. The academic board has been reconstituted after a year without a meeting. The importance of its role in quality assurance is specified in the strategic plan and the board's failure to meet may have hindered the college-wide development of quality assurance. Inadequate use has been made of staff development to support the delivery of quality assurance. Performance indicators are underdeveloped.

57 There is a sound framework for course evaluation and review. Good practice in some departments includes reviews of progress and the formulation of action plans by departmental managers. The value of the reports produced by programme teams varies considerably. In the best examples, reports are comprehensive, based on well-structured proforma, and result in clearly-identified actions to improve quality. However, too many of the reports are superficial and have little impact on the delivery of programmes. In some cases, opinions of students and of external agencies are not, as intended, used effectively to inform the process of course evaluation.

58 A pilot scheme for the appraisal of teaching staff has been completed and the results will be considered by the governors in the near future. The inclusion of support staff within the scheme has been deferred until September 1994. Staff-development needs arising from the college's strategic priorities are not identified systematically but there has been a sound approach to some of the assessor training for staff. The organisation and management of staff development is ineffective. The college has no comprehensive manual of college procedures for new and existing staff, nor a systematic approach to updating lecturers' industrial awareness. Induction arrangements for full and part-time staff are uneven and there is no effective college-wide evaluation of its implementation.

59 Teachers providing further education teacher-training courses for college staff and others wishing to enhance their teaching skills give particular attention to the process of interviewing students and to the assessment and accreditation of prior learning. Links with the college's staff-development strategy are not always clear. However, the experience of staff who enrol on these courses is generally good.

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## RESOURCES

60 On both sites, there are good specialist facilities which are appropriate to the courses and programmes. Some specialist areas are poorly organised, untidy and without adequate storage facilities. Most general classrooms on the Park Lane site provide adequate accommodation for teaching. The temperature control in some temporary classrooms is ineffective. Most of the teaching accommodation at the Park Green site is drab and uninviting; some classrooms are in urgent need of refurbishment. On a few occasions, inappropriate use was made of general teaching rooms, in terms of their size and fitness for purpose. Some learning support workshops were not available to students because the appropriate rooms were timetabled for other lessons.

61 At the Park Lane site, most of the accommodation is accessible to students with physical disabilities. This has been achieved through a planned programme of improvements. Inaccessible areas have been identified for future improvement. Room changes are made, where necessary, to accommodate students with mobility difficulties. Access at the Park Green site is severely limited.

62 The accommodation at the Park Lane site is cleaned and decorated to a high standard. There has been considerable recent refurbishment and there is a planned scheme to bring all rooms to an agreed specification. Public areas are furnished appropriately. At the Park Green site, public areas are not so well maintained and the accommodation presents a poorer image.

63 The library facilities at the Park Lane site are inadequate. There is insufficient shelf and study space. The library has a good range of periodicals but there are insufficient numbers of relevant books to support many of the college's courses. There is often no formal liaison between course tutors and the librarian in the selection of relevant stock and the planned use of the library for assignments. For students who are permanently based at the Park Green site, the absence of a college library on site is a clear disadvantage. The college resource centre, housing learning aids and reprographic facilities, provides a useful service for both staff and students but access is difficult and space limited. The photocopying facility is inadequate for the volume of use.

64 There is sufficient specialist equipment to support the college's courses. Much of it has been improved in recent years but obsolete equipment remains. Recent improvements in computer provision for information technology across the curriculum have resulted in an adequate base of hardware and software. Access to these facilities is severely restricted because the rooms involved are sometimes timetabled for lessons. For students with learning difficulties, the previously inadequate information technology resources at the Park Green site are being improved with the help of a substantial external grant.



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65 Most teachers are well qualified academically. Many have relevant and recent industrial experience. There are gaps in expertise in a minority of specific areas and many staff lack the skills and confidence to incorporate the use of information technology into their teaching. There is a high proportion of part-time staff in some curriculum areas: while this allows for greater flexibility in the deployment of staff, such teachers are insufficiently involved in course team activities including course development, review and evaluation. There is a good level of technician support in some sections. In other sections, such as computing studies, it is inadequate. Most support staff have appropriate experience and qualifications. Many have degrees.

### **CONCLUSIONS AND ISSUES**

66 The college is making progress towards achieving its mission of providing an excellent quality of education and training which serves the needs of individuals and of the community. Particular strengths of the provision inspected are:

- the governors' clear perception of their role and their involvement in strategic planning
- the quality of strategic planning
- the college's responsiveness to industry and the local community
- the high standard of much of the teaching
- the quality of pre-enrolment guidance and induction for students
- the work of the student services unit
- well-qualified teachers, many of whom have recent and relevant industrial experience.

67 The college has to address each of the following areas if it is to maintain and improve the quality of its provision and the standards of achievement of its students:

- the management information systems
- the arrangements for quality assurance
- consistency of practice in course evaluation
- the management of staff development
- the quality of library provision and students' access to information technology
- the links between GCE/GCSE courses and vocational courses where both form part of a students's programme
- the general levels of achievement in external examinations
- the development of value added measures.

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## FIGURES

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1 Enrolments by age (1993-94)

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2 Enrolments expressed as full-time equivalents by mode of study (1993-94)

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

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4 Enrolments by programme area (1993-94)

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5 Recurrent income (April 1993-July 1994)

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6 Estimated expenditure (1993-94)

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

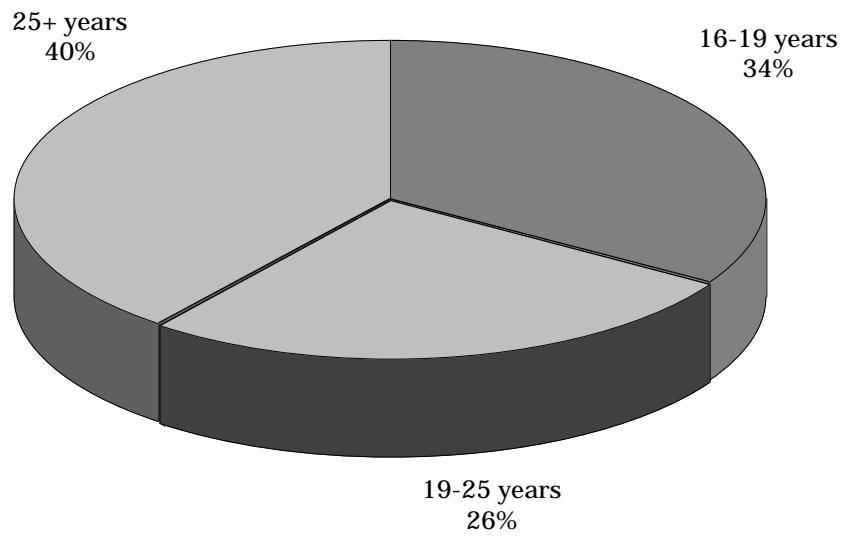
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**Figure 1**

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**Macclesfield College: enrolments by age (1993-94)**

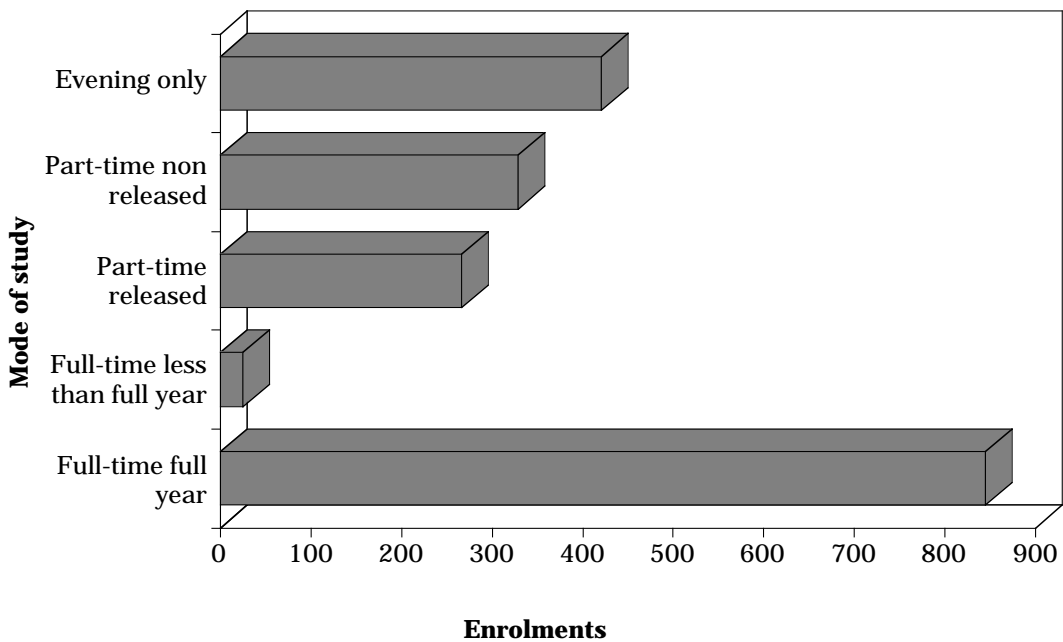


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**Figure 2**

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**Macclesfield College: enrolments expressed as full-time equivalents by mode of study (1993-94)**

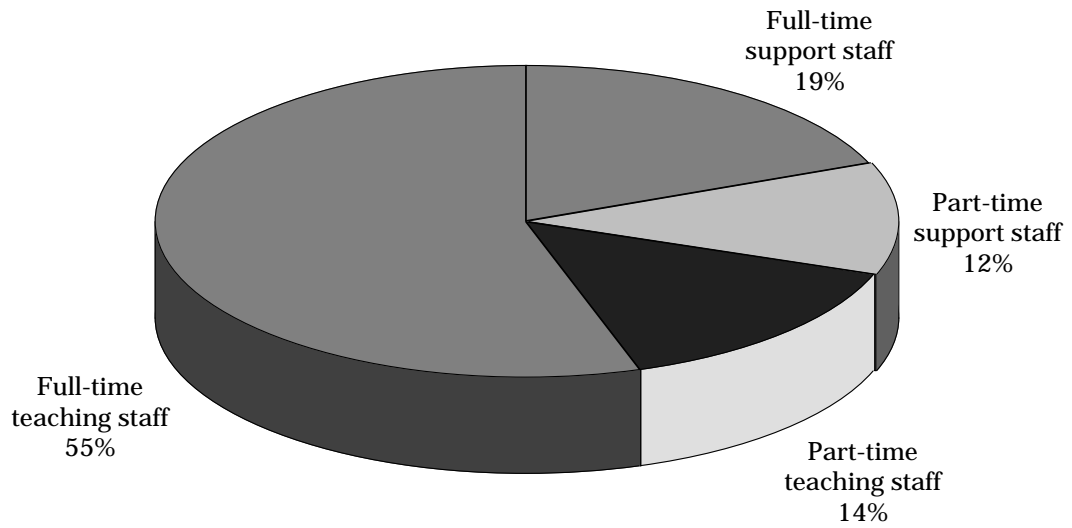


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**Figure 3**

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**Macclesfield College: staff profile – staff expressed as full-time equivalents (1993-94)**

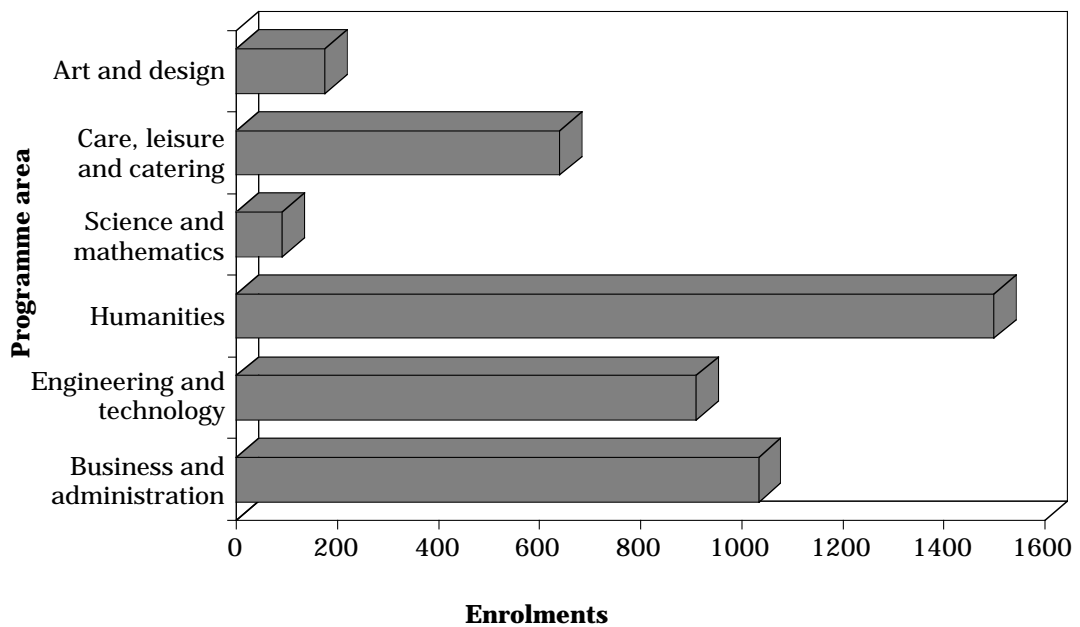


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**Figure 4**

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**Macclesfield College: enrolments by programme area (1993-94)**

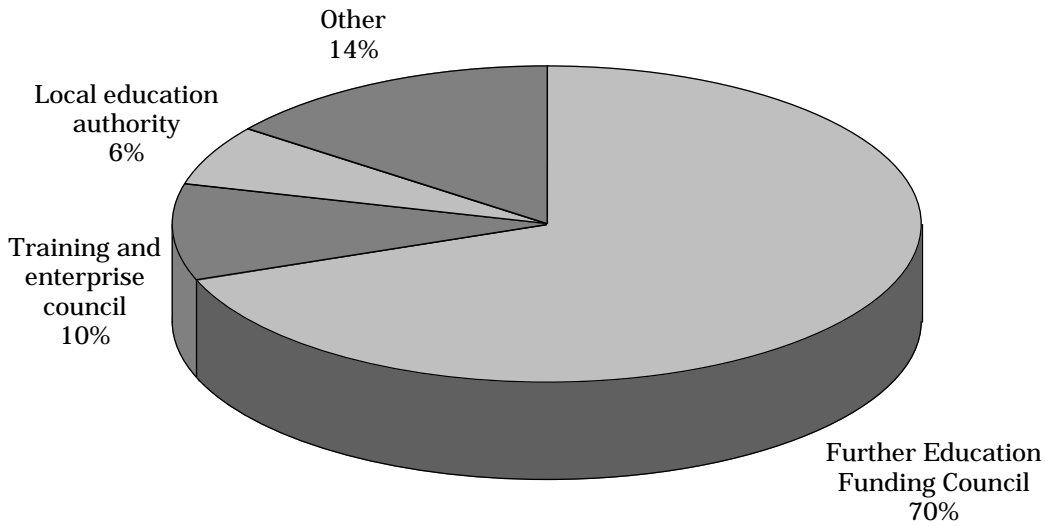


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**Figure 5**

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**Macclesfield College: recurrent income (April 1993-July 1994)**



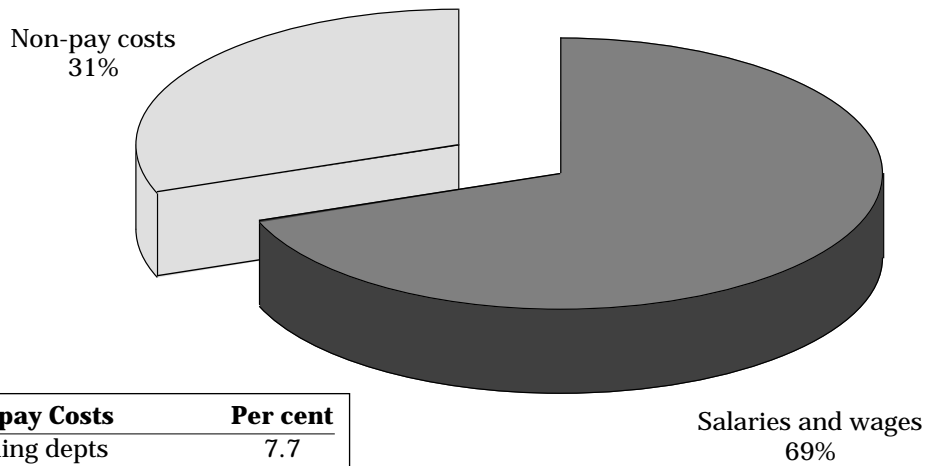
Total recurrent income: £6,143,000

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**Figure 6**

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**Macclesfield College: estimated expenditure (1993-94)**



<b>Non-pay Costs</b>	<b>Per cent</b>
teaching depts	7.7
teaching support library	0.9
other support	0.9
admin & central service	6.2
general education	3.4
premises	9.3
refectory	1.3
other costs	1.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>31</b>

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