

**REPORT
FROM THE
INSPECTORATE**

New College, Durham

September 1996

**THE
FURTHER
EDUCATION
FUNDING
COUNCIL**

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FUNDING COUNCIL**

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

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

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GRADE DESCRIPTORS

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

The descriptors for the grades are:

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

By June 1995, some 208 college inspections had been completed. The grade profiles for aspects of cross-college provision and programme areas for the 208 colleges are shown in the following table.

College grade profiles 1993-95

Activity	Inspection grades				
	1	2	3	4	5
Programme area	9%	60%	28%	3%	<1%
Cross-college provision	13%	51%	31%	5%	<1%
Overall	11%	56%	29%	4%	<1%

FEFC INSPECTION REPORT 108/96

NEW COLLEGE, DURHAM

NORTHERN REGION

Inspected August 1995-May 1996

Summary

New College, Durham offers a wide range of courses from foundation to higher education level, through a variety of modes of attendance. It has strong links with colleges and businesses abroad. Members of the board of the corporation have, collectively, a considerable range of expertise. They are committed to furthering the college's success. Staff at each level work well together in teams. Teaching is generally good and it is excellent in health, care and art and design. Students benefit from high-quality counselling, careers advice and support for their learning. Quality assurance and control systems for courses are well established and thorough and they are regularly reviewed. There is an extensive range of effective staff-development activities. The college has improved the accessibility of its accommodation for persons with physical disabilities. General security arrangements have been strengthened. The college has carried out an exhaustive and honest process of self-assessment. The college should address the following issues: its underdeveloped process for strategic planning; its poor links with schools; inadequate internal channels of communication; poor retention rates of students on some courses; and some inadequacies in equipment and accommodation.

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

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

Curriculum area	Grade	Curriculum area	Grade
Science, mathematics and computing	3	Hotel, catering, travel and tourism	2
Construction	2	Health, care, hairdressing and beauty therapy	1
Engineering	2	Art and design	1
Business	2	Humanities	3

INTRODUCTION

1 New College, Durham was inspected in three stages between August 1995 and May 1996. Enrolment and induction were inspected in late August and September, specialist programmes in February and March and the cross-college aspects of provision in May 1996. Inspectors spent 83 days in the college. A total of 204 teaching sessions were observed. Inspectors examined students' work. They held discussions with students, parents, staff, members of the corporation and with representatives from local schools, industry, the local education authority, County Durham Training and Enterprise Council (TEC), the community, and higher education.

THE COLLEGE AND ITS AIMS

2 New College, Durham was founded in 1977 as a result of a merger between Durham Technical College and Neville's Cross College of Education. It operates from two centres located on the outskirts of the historic city of Durham. Provision funded by the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) covers the full range of programme areas except agriculture. Provision at intermediate, advanced and higher levels is offered at both sites. At the Framwellgate Moor site, the college also offers foundation level programmes. Provision funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England is at higher national diploma, degree and postgraduate levels and is offered at both sites. The Neville's Cross site includes a residential campus for 450 students, the majority of whom are studying for higher education qualifications.

3 County Durham has a population of 597,000 people. It is predominantly rural and 75 per cent of the county's population live in settlements of under 30,000 people and are widely distributed. The county has areas of rural deprivation and in some parts, there is a lack of public transport. Durham City has a population of 38,000 people. The county's unemployment rate of 10 per cent is above the national average. Unemployment rates are predicted to remain high and vary significantly across the county. Thirty-three per cent of all unemployed people in the county are under 25 years of age.

4 The number of school leavers for the county reached a peak of 7,219 in 1995. This number is expected to decline slightly over the next four years. The latest figures available, those from 1994, show that only 7 per cent of school leavers went into employment. Numbers participating in youth training have fallen from 38 per cent of those leaving school in 1990, to 27 per cent in 1994. There has been an increase in the proportion of school leavers staying on in full-time further education after the age of 16 from 42 per cent to 54 per cent. Participation rates in full-time education are higher in Durham City than in the rest of County Durham. These comparatively higher participation rates are not, however, reflected in the college's enrolments. The college is in competition for post-16 students with four comprehensive schools in the city which have sixth forms.

5 The college is a key provider of education and training in the county. It recruits 83 per cent of its students from County Durham. It recruits nationally for its full-time higher education programmes and has a small number of overseas students. In November 1995, there were 12,054 students at the college, of whom 2,385 were full time and 9,669 were part time. Ninety per cent of the students are on courses which are funded by the FEFC. Enrolments by age, by level of study, and by mode of attendance and curriculum area are shown in figures 1, 2 and 3 respectively. The college has 297 full-time equivalent teachers and 249 full-time equivalent support staff. Of the support staff, 52 full-time equivalent staff directly support learning. A staff profile, with staff expressed as full-time equivalents, is shown in figure 4. During 1995-96, the college expects to provide customised training for over 1,500 people in the manufacturing and service industries. The Prison Service Agency has a contract with the college to provide education and training in five prison establishments in Durham and Northumberland.

6 The college's mission is principally concerned with the development of students' capabilities to enable them to progress successfully to employment. In support of this central purpose the college provides work placement opportunities locally, nationally and internationally for students on full-time courses. The college also participates, in collaboration with Durham TEC and other organisations, in developing a strategy to promote lifelong learning in and around Durham City.

RESPONSIVENESS AND RANGE OF PROVISION

7 The college advertises a comprehensive range of courses which offers education and training to a variety of clients. Progression opportunities for students within the college are excellent. The Open University and local universities validate the college's degree and postgraduate courses. There are higher national certificate, diploma, and management and accountancy programmes at National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) levels 4 and 5. The college is one of only two further education sector colleges in England offering a course leading to one of the awards of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy. A university diploma course in health studies for registered nurses recruits well. The college is a centre for teacher training. It offers courses leading to the initial certificate for teachers of basic skills, City and Guilds of London Institute (C&G) 7306 and 7307 awards, the certificate in education, and a BA honours degree in post-compulsory education. Fifty-three per cent of the 2,484 higher education students at the college are on courses funded by the FEFC.

8 There are a large number of courses at foundation, intermediate and advanced level. There are 53 separate NVQ and 22 General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) programmes as well as courses leading to Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) certificates and diplomas. The college offers 30 subjects at General Certificate of Education advanced level (GCE A level), some of which are also offered as advanced

supplementary (AS) subjects, and 27 subjects for the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE). GCE A level students have additional opportunities to participate in recreation, leisure, core and study skill activities validated through the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network. The college, through its managing agency, is responsible for 41 modern apprentices and 161 youth trainees.

9 Provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities has been significantly increased. It has been developed with enthusiasm by staff. A successful 'pathways to living' programme has been introduced to cater for 16 to 19 year old students with moderate learning difficulties. A former student with cerebral palsy who gained qualifications in carpentry and joinery, is now helping to train others with similar disabilities. There is a thriving 'living in the community' provision for 97 students, 70 per cent of whom are adults. A fruitful partnership with a specialist training college has resulted in the development of specialist learning support for individual students who are profoundly disabled. Staff are confident that they will be able to respond to the increasing number of enquiries for this support. The service for students with aural and visual impairment is managed by a sensory impairment officer. It offers a wide range of learning support that is highly regarded in the community.

10 The college makes a variety of attendance patterns possible for students. Students can study part time or full time, through block-release or day-release arrangements or through participation in workshop sessions on Saturdays. The college provides opportunities and facilities for open learning which enable students to study on their own, at times which suit them, using learning materials suited to their individual needs. There are also opportunities for distance learning for students who cannot attend college regularly. Through distance learning, some students are enabled to study at home using learning packages produced by the college. The college is the only one in the country to obtain BTEC accreditation for open learning materials leading to the certificate in housing association development. There are departmental co-ordinators for open and distance learning. The college has not established a systematic means of developing open and distance learning or sharing good practice in this mode of provision. Some courses are delivered in the community; for example, the 'help your child in school' project is offered at three primary schools and a local library. However, the college recognises that the volume of its outreach work is small.

11 The college faces strong competition from schools and other colleges in the area. There are good links with three special schools and short link courses are provided for pupils at these schools in a range of practical subjects. One comprehensive school has negotiated for a small number of its pupils to attend classes at the college in some GCE A level subjects. The college has carried out its own enquiry into its liaison arrangements with local schools and has found these to be inadequate. It recognises that

marketing to schools needs to be improved and that it should enter into more joint projects with them on the curriculum.

12 Links with employers and the community are well developed. Departmental advisory groups include industrial or commercial representatives who often contribute to course planning and provide valuable feedback on the quality of courses taken by their employees. Employers consider work placements for students to be effectively managed, and they are invited to comment on students' performance during their work experience. Staff have been successful in identifying new markets and in devising programmes to meet the needs of the community. For example, they have developed a course to cater for the needs of wives of Muslim students at Durham University. Relationships with Durham TEC are productive at a number of levels; for example, the TEC's chief executive is a member of the college's board. Durham TEC has funded collaborative projects involving the college. These include investigating procedures for accrediting prior learning, ways of using the Internet as a learning tool and an 'environmental action project' with two other colleges.

13 The college's international officer chairs a working party which initiates and publicises a variety of activities and projects with a European dimension. For example, a multilingual European newspaper was produced in collaboration with students from France, the Netherlands, Finland and Germany. The college makes frequent, successful bids for funds from the European community. It has many links with colleges and other organisations abroad. The college's mission statement places importance on the need for students to have skills and knowledge to work abroad. However, many courses do not provide tuition in modern foreign languages.

14 The quality of market research has been improved by the use of external consultants. The opinions of students have been surveyed, and were taken into account in the writing and preparation of the college's 1996-97 prospectus. The prospectus still lacks important details about the college's provision. Course leaflets are unimaginative. The college's publicity literature, in general, lacks positive images of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those from minority ethnic groups. Mailing lists are incomplete. In some instances, the distribution of publicity materials to employers is too slow.

15 A significant volume of short courses, tailored to meet the needs of employers, have been developed on a full-cost basis. These courses are provided at the college or on employers' premises within a 'services to business' programme. This is directed by a manager who is responsible for selling courses to employers and for co-ordinating the activities initiated within departments. In addition, there are 55 business development staff based in departments who negotiate short course contracts directly with employers. This area of work has been successful. Managers of the

'education in prisons' programme have established a national support group for colleges providing prison education.

16 The college has an equal opportunities statement and an officer who has been allocated two hours a week to develop work in this field. Staff are, in general, aware of equal opportunities issues and suitable training is available. Students are informed of their rights and responsibilities in the context of equal opportunities during the induction period. Although a task group on equal opportunities meets at the Framwellgate Moor site, the college has no wider forum for the discussion of equal opportunities issues.

GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

17 The corporation has 12 members including the principal. Its members have a broad and relevant range of expertise and are drawn from the health service, business, personnel, management, higher education, finance and the law. The board has recently filled a vacancy with someone who has experience of estates management. Two members are women, including the staff governor. The board meets four times a year and has a number of committees. The most active are policy and finance, which meets twice a term, and audit, convened termly. The secretary to the corporation is the director of estates and administration. The board has paid due attention to issues of probity by completing a register of interests and, more recently, a code of conduct.

18 Board members are committed to the college and work effectively as a team within their terms of reference. They see their role as strategic rather than operational. They receive regular financial reports and academic board papers. After incorporation, the board concentrated on the college's financial security. It now recognises that it has other priorities and has included these in its own mission statement. Members have held two residential meetings as well as evening seminars to address their training and development needs. A working party has been set up to consider how the board's performance may be reviewed. There is no induction programme for new members. The board does not receive reports on some important aspects of the college's activity. It received its first report on students' achievements in May 1996. It does not receive regular reports from the health and safety committee or from the task group on equal opportunities. At present, the principal is the primary channel of communication between the board and the college. Both staff and corporation board members consider that links between them need to be strengthened.

19 The college's management structures were reorganised in July 1995. The principalship consists of the principal, two vice-principals, the director of estates and administration, and the director of finance. As a result of the reorganisations, the number of academic departments was reduced from seven to four. Three departments providing services to the college

were also established to strengthen and raise the profile of cross-college activities. These are: learning services, covering all aspects of student support; information services, covering management information needs; and customer services, covering student services and external links. The senior management team comprises the seven heads of department, the academic registrar and the five members of the principalship.

20 The new management structure is relatively simple to understand and is generally effective. Departments have a considerable degree of autonomy. All departments have a departmental board and a number of advisory boards. However, there are variations in management practices and structures within the four teaching departments. Some have departmental management teams but others do not. Not all departmental heads are supported by an assistant head of department. The interpretation of the roles and responsibilities of directors of resource and directors of studies varies considerably from one department to another. There are inconsistencies in the workloads and working practices of staff in different departments.

21 The college's first strategic plan was developed primarily by the principalship with help from the board of the corporation, academic board and the senior management team. The college's strategic aims are supported by statements of general values and principles. The plan incorporates an operating statement, identifying actions to be taken and their related resource implications. The actions are expressed in general terms and do not link explicitly to the college's strategic aims. For the next planning cycle, each department has been asked to produce a plan. No common framework for this has been agreed. There are no formal systems for checking that the departmental plans reflect the college's strategic plan. No annual planning cycle has been established, and since the production of the first plan the corporation's involvement in the planning process has been small. Managers recognise that the involvement of staff in the devising of the strategic plan has been limited.

22 Staff work effectively together in teams at various levels in the college. Course teams meet regularly, and their meetings are generally well documented. Team members speak positively about the support they receive from colleagues, and express pride in developments within their own areas. Heads of department work well together, meeting at least once a month. The senior management team meets weekly to discuss matters of information, and monthly to consider management issues. In addition it meets termly to consider college strategy and longer-term issues. Recently the senior management team has introduced a further termly meeting for itself at which issues relating to quality are discussed. The senior management team is responsible for a wide range of management functions. There are insufficient opportunities for other managers, below senior management level, to assist with some of these functions. The college has not made adequate progress in addressing a number of management issues, on which it was agreed that action was necessary.

23 Communication at course level and, in some instances, at departmental level is good. However, communications between departments, between sites, and between the principalship and college staff are less effective. A number of staff report that members of the principalship are rarely seen around the college. The location of some senior managers, including the principal, in a separate building a few minutes walk from one of the sites has reinforced a perception of their remoteness.

24 The college's academic board has a wide membership. Among its roles, it oversees the development of college curriculum policies. There is a standard format for the presentation of such policies. It also identifies the need for policies on specific issues. The college's current set of policies are of varying age and usefulness, and not all meet the academic board's requirements in terms of their presentation. Following incorporation, the college introduced principalship support groups to replace existing academic board subcommittees. These were reconstituted in the summer of 1995. Most serve as a useful forum where staff from across the college can discuss and share ideas. However, minutes of the meetings of these support groups are not widely available. Many staff are not members of any group and have little involvement in cross-college activities. Some staff are not aware the groups exist.

25 Responsibility for the implementation, management and review of college financial systems is delegated to the director of finance. There are well-established and effective procedures for financial management. For example, the controls and checks in relation to the ordering and payment of invoices are systematic. Budget holders are regularly sent reports on their financial position. Financial allocations to budget holders are made on a historical basis with some alteration to take account of changing levels of activity. Many budget holders do not fully understand this process. Development of unit costing is slow. There has been insufficient analysis of the cost of different activities within the college.

26 The principalship has recently identified the average level of funding as a key performance indicator. The college's average level of funding for 1995-96 is £20.77 per unit compared with the median of £17.84 for general further education and tertiary colleges in the sector. The college's estimated income and expenditure for the 12 months to July 1996 are shown in figures 5 and 6.

27 Managers recognise that there is a need for comprehensive computerised management information systems that meet the requirements of a variety of users at different levels. The system used for financial control is satisfactory but other systems required to support and inform management decisions are inadequate. Staff view the college's management information systems as cumbersome and inaccurate and claim that little use is made of the information they provide. There is mistrust of the system and its outputs. Many staff maintain their own databases. Verification of data is ineffective. For example, the recent

report to the board of the corporation on students' achievements contained serious inaccuracies even though it had been sent to tutors for checking.

28 The director of estates and administration has recently taken over responsibility for health and safety issues. Representatives on the health and safety committee have been selected to serve on this body because of their enthusiasm for its work. However, the committee has recently been reconstituted and its members are not aware of lines of communication between them and the rest of the college. The health and safety policy states that an annual report is required but no one in the college can remember when one was produced. The policy was finalised in August 1993. It states that there should be adequate inspection procedures. There are no such procedures, however, and the college has, this year, considered appointing safety advisers and establishing health and safety support groups. Not all departments have these groups and those that are in existence have only met a few times. Safety checks on each area have not been carried out systematically. The college's safety manual is incomplete.

STUDENTS' RECRUITMENT, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

29 Enquiries from potential students are generally dealt with effectively. Staff at the help desk at the entrance to the Framwellgate Moor site explain to enquirers how and where they may obtain specialist advice. College staff visit schools to provide careers advice. Head teachers told inspectors that the organisation of these visits has recently improved. Some courses recruit well because of their good reputation, the college's strong industrial links or the personal recommendations of students, past and present. The college holds open days each month and these have attracted many potential students. Staff have had some difficulties coping with the large numbers who attend these and dealing, within the time available, with all their requests for information. The college's telephone system is inadequate for the volume of callers who make enquiries at peak times.

30 The main enrolment period is during September but students can enrol throughout the year on many courses. The enrolment process is effectively managed. An admissions unit receives all applications and provides valuable administrative support to staff conducting enrolment interviews. Admissions tutors work on a rota throughout the summer. The attendance of students at enrolment advice sessions is monitored and the effectiveness of the enrolment process is evaluated. There are sometimes delays in accepting students. In a few instances, admissions tutors took a long time dealing with problems caused by students' financial hardship.

31 Induction sessions for students are thorough. During these, students are given information about their course and the college's services. Staff conducting the sessions emphasise important issues such as students' rights and responsibilities, health and safety, and equality of opportunity. These introductory sessions often include presentations from specialist support staff and the identification of the needs of individual students for

help with their learning. There is considerable variation across departments in the organisation and implementation of induction sessions. Many sessions were too long and did not hold the students' interest.

32 Personal tutors give individual support to full-time and some part-time students. Most tutorials are generally well planned. They develop students' study skills. Tutors introduce students to individual action planning and records of achievement. Students' attendance and their progress in lessons and individual support sessions are monitored through concern notes. These bring concerns about the students to the attention of personal tutors. Seven tutor advisers liaise effectively with the college's careers, advice and counselling service. They keep personal tutors informed about the availability of tutorial materials, changes to tutorial policy and the extensive staff-development opportunities available to them. Tutors are sometimes not able to participate in staff-development activities because of timetable commitments. Some tutorials are not effectively monitored or evaluated. They are variable in quality and there is inconsistency in their implementation.

33 All full-time, and some part-time students, have their literacy and numeracy skills tested. Departmental tutors and members of the learning support team work well together in providing assistance to those students who need help with their basic skills. This assistance is available to students as part of their course. It is also provided in the Lumley learning centre on the Framwellgate Moor site. The number of students receiving help at the centre has steadily increased. Students are appreciative of the additional support for their learning which the college provides. Volunteers, including some past students, play a valuable part in giving this support. Staff at the Lumley centre are developing a multi-media software project which is sponsored by the National Council for Education Technology. The project is designed to help students on basic skills programmes find their way round college and understand the range of services available to them. Staff have also created software to help keep track of students' needs for additional support with their learning, and cost the provision made for them.

34 There is a comprehensive careers advice and counselling service. This is well publicised and it is used by current and potential students. The service is regularly and rigorously evaluated. Students speak highly of its responsiveness and of the support it provides. Counselling staff are highly qualified. Their case loads are monitored. A contract with County Durham careers service has led to increased levels of service. Counselling staff are deployed to each department to provide guidance for students.

35 There are systems for monitoring students' attendance and progress. In general, teachers inform tutors of students whose attendance and performance are problematical. In some curriculum areas, however, checks on absenteeism are not effective. Registers are poorly kept and there is no evidence of action taken on extensive absenteeism. Some parents expressed concern that reporting on students' attendance and

progress was poor and that it varied in effectiveness from one department to another.

36 There are well-established procedures for accrediting the knowledge and skills which students have acquired before joining the college. These procedures identify roles for advisers, counsellors and verifiers in relation to students' prior learning. College staff have developed services for the accreditation of prior learning through projects, which are funded by the European Union and Durham TEC. In these projects, staff accredit the previous learning and experience of people affected by the decline of mining and other industries. In February 1996, an audit of the college's accreditation of prior learning activity was undertaken. There were examples of students who were enabled to progress in their studies more rapidly, or gain units of a qualification, as a result of the accreditation of their prior learning. There are limited opportunities for accreditation of prior learning in some programme areas. Some teachers are not sufficiently aware how the accreditation of prior learning might benefit their students.

37 A creche provides 12 childcare places at the Framwellgate Moor site. It is intended to increase this to 24 places by September 1996. Creche staff are well qualified. Attempts are made to keep the creche charges to a minimum. There is no college policy on students who find it difficult to meet the cost of childcare. There are no creche facilities at the Neville's Cross site.

38 The students' union makes an effective contribution to the welfare of students at the Neville's Cross site. A teacher of finance and accountancy gives help and support to the students' union in managing its financial affairs.

TEACHING AND THE PROMOTION OF LEARNING

39 Of the 204 sessions inspected, 68 per cent had strengths that outweighed the weaknesses. Seven per cent had weaknesses that outweighed the strengths. The grades awarded to the sessions inspected are shown in the following table.

Teaching sessions: inspection grades by programme of study

Programmes	Grade	1	2	3	4	5	Totals
Access to further and higher education		3	5	3	1	0	12
GCE AS/A level		2	9	9	2	0	22
GCSE		1	3	4	5	0	13
GNVQ		13	13	8	4	0	38
NVQ		7	24	6	0	0	37
Basic education		0	3	1	0	0	4
Higher education		2	3	1	1	0	7
Other vocational		18	18	13	0	0	49
Other		8	7	6	0	1	22
Total		54	85	51	13	1	204

40 The overall attendance in the classes observed was 75 per cent of those on the register, and the average class size was 10. The largest classes seen were in travel and tourism which averaged 14 students. The smallest classes were in hairdressing and beauty therapy with fewer than seven students per session. There was a wide difference in the attendance rates between curriculum areas and between levels of study. For example, there was an attendance rate of over 85 per cent in construction, care and engineering lessons whilst in hairdressing, beauty therapy and some humanities lessons, the attendance rates were less than 60 per cent. In higher education classes, the attendance rate was 86 per cent. In GCSE and access to further and higher education classes, attendance rates were below 65 per cent.

41 Teaching is generally of good quality. Teachers provide their students with a range of imaginative and relevant activities which excite and sustain their interest. Teachers show genuine enthusiasm for their subjects. Many schemes of work were, however, no more than lists of topics. Some teachers did not inform students of the aims for each lesson. Assessment practices varied considerably. In some areas, such as art and design, there were well-prepared assessment sheets. These contained useful comments on how students might improve their work. In other subject areas, teachers did not set their students enough work. There was also considerable delay before they returned work to students and assessment was sometimes insufficiently detailed.

42 The teaching of science, mathematics and computing is generally sound. In the best lessons, teachers provided students with a variety of appropriate activities. These included working in groups, computer simulations and educational games which the students found amusing and enjoyable. Teachers made effective use of video recordings. They

used questioning techniques skilfully to check that the students had understood the lessons. Vocational courses in science have well-documented assessment strategies. The grading of students' work is moderated by involving other teachers in its marking. In sports studies, core skills are successfully integrated with each element of the course. In some good lessons, teachers successfully related theory to modern business practice. Poorer lessons were characterised by inefficient management of time by the teacher, insufficient variety of activities and unsatisfactory use of teaching aids. Some classes with a majority of adults in them were not well taught. In many instances, adult students were given insufficient opportunity to take responsibility for their own learning. In some practical lessons in biology, chemistry and physics, teachers set a poor example by not wearing laboratory coats or safety spectacles, even when they had told their students to do so.

43 Teaching in construction is of high quality. In lessons, teachers encouraged students to work effectively on their own and at a pace that suited them best. Craft students carried out realistic projects which matched NVQ performance specifications. The students expressed their appreciation of their teachers. A variety of teaching techniques and materials were used successfully to develop students' understanding of industrial practices. Records of students' progress were well maintained, particularly in relation to tracking NVQ achievements and the core skills of numeracy and communications. In a few instances, in classrooms converted from workshops, teachers did not project their voices well and they could not be heard properly. In some practical lessons, the students were given insufficient information to allow them to complete projects successfully.

44 In engineering, the teaching of both theory and practice is of high quality. Teachers monitored the students' understanding through direct questioning or by observing their performance during practical activities. Good learning materials were provided. For example, in a particularly successful motor vehicle lesson, the teacher used extracts from a manufacturer's handbook with well-prepared overhead projector transparencies; copies of these were provided for the students. Teachers frequently drew on their own industrial experiences to enliven their presentations. Students were set assessments of an appropriate standard. Teachers did not, however, give enough emphasis to core skills and students did not develop these sufficiently.

45 The quality of teaching is high in all four divisions of the business department. Teachers work well together. Lessons are planned effectively. The quality of teaching and learning materials provided by teachers is high. Assessment is carefully and efficiently recorded. In the most effective lessons, teachers provided students with a wide range of appropriate learning activities which ensured their full participation. For example, higher national certificate students on a block-release course, gave

presentations of high quality, in which they drew on their own experiences of work and knowledge they had acquired in previous lessons. In a small number of lessons, the activities were not well planned. For example, in some practical lessons, students, irrespective of their ability, were all expected to work at the same pace on the same task with the result that the more able students were insufficiently challenged. Some longer lessons were not well structured or efficiently managed by the teacher and they started late.

46 Teaching in hotel and catering and in travel and tourism is of a high standard. Schemes of work are well structured and carefully designed. They include work placements and educational visits. Teachers use an appropriate range of teaching and learning methods and activities. In the best lessons, students were required to carry out imaginative tasks. For example, in a GNVQ lesson, students carried out a role-playing exercise which investigated relationships between employees in the workplace. In the recently-introduced GNVQ in leisure and tourism, the development of core skills of communication, number and information technology were not sufficiently integrated with teaching and learning of the vocational content of the course. In a few catering and hotel management lessons, teachers did not ensure that all students were participating fully and effectively.

47 The teaching in health and community care is excellent. The planning and preparation of lessons are good. In lessons, teachers successfully related learning to vocational and personal experience with which the students could easily identify. For example, in one nursery nursing lesson, the students and their teacher were able to share feelings and emotions and admit their own shortcomings without embarrassment. Many teachers used imaginative teaching techniques. The themes of some lessons were topical. In one successful psychology lesson on a GNVQ course, students explored the concept of stress in relation to 'life events'. The class was encouraged to study research findings and relate these to their own experiences. The students produced an effective critique of the published research. Students on a diploma course in playgroup practice made excellent presentations, based on thorough research, on health and safety issues in relation to toys. The teacher clearly and helpfully reinforced the main points and principles of safety at the end of each student's presentation.

48 Much of the teaching in hairdressing and beauty therapy is good. Teachers provide their students with a range of appropriate and effective learning methods. Students' progress is documented clearly and concisely. In lessons, students were encouraged to relate theory to practice. A wide range of clients use the hairdressing salon and, consequently, students are able to complete a varied range of practical assessments. Clients in the beauty salon are offered 'pamper days' for a small sum. For this, they can have any available beauty treatment and lunch in the college's restaurant.

'Pamper days' are popular and enable students to gain experience of working with clients who require a variety of different treatments. In some instances, teachers could have made more use of teaching aids, such as overhead projectors, to illustrate points they were making. Students made insufficient use of the information technology facilities available to them.

49 The quality of teaching in art, design and the performing arts is excellent. In lessons, teachers showed great enthusiasm for their subjects. They explained the objectives for each lesson, frequently reminded their students of these, and made sure the students knew what was expected of them. Project work was broad in its scope. In one lesson, students successfully carried out a drama improvisation exploring attitudes to women who worked in factories during the Second World War. The improvisation helped the students to understand a number of key social issues of the period, including the differences in the rates of pay between men and women for the same job. The students then compared and contrasted these issues with comparable issues of the present day. In most lessons, students were provided with good-quality handouts and learning aids. Teachers gave excellent help and support to students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

50 Teacher training lessons are well planned and meet the needs of adult students. The quality of teaching in modern languages varies considerably from one lesson to another but is generally effective. In lessons, students were encouraged to build on their previous linguistic knowledge and skills and explore aspects of the country whose language they were studying. Tasks and activities carried out by the students in lessons were relevant to the syllabus and they were well documented. In some less satisfactory lessons, teachers failed to draw upon, and check, the knowledge and skills the students already had. In other instances, the teachers provided information which the students could have discovered for themselves and the lesson lacked a sense of purpose and momentum.

51 The quality of teaching in English, geography, history, psychology, sociology and religious education varies considerably from subject to subject. In most lessons, teachers provided students with a variety of appropriate learning activities. The students made effective use of good handouts, textbooks and other learning. Teachers illustrated points with clear overhead transparencies. They helped students to build on their previous knowledge and experience. In some lessons, the teacher's management of the time available was poor. For example, students in one geography lesson were divided into groups and began working on a particular task. They were needlessly interrupted by the teacher three times within a short space of time, and they became frustrated when their concentration was disturbed. Some classes contained students from different year groups and they represented a wide range of ability. Some staff found it difficult to teach such a diversity of aptitude and ability. They

resorted to talking too much and did not question the students sufficiently or encourage them to ask questions and engage in discussion.

STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENTS

52 Most students were highly motivated to achieve and were responsive in class. They spoke enthusiastically about their programmes of study. In some subjects, such as English, religious education, sociology and travel and tourism, students were given opportunities to develop the skills of working together in groups. Group work in travel and tourism was of a particularly high standard. In other subjects, such as modern foreign languages, students were not given sufficient opportunities to work in groups.

53 The Department for Education and Employment's performance tables for students entered for GCE AS/A level examinations in 1995, show the college scoring an average of 3.1 points per entry (where grade A=10 points, E=2). This places the college in the bottom third of all colleges in the further education sector. The tables for students, aged 16 to 18, in their final year of study on vocational courses show that 76 per cent were successful. This places the college in the middle third of all colleges in the sector on this performance measure.

54 Students on vocational courses in science achieved good results. For example, those studying for sports studies awards obtained results above the national average last year. The BTEC national diploma students and the first diploma students achieved 79 per cent and 90 per cent pass rates, respectively. However, over 33 per cent of students originally enrolled on these courses left prior to the final assessment. Students studying for GCE A level science subjects have performed well over the last three years. Many science students, however, did not achieve the A to C grades at GCE A level predicted for them on the basis of their previous attainment in the GCSE and other examinations. GCSE results in science have been generally poor. For example, of students taking biology, only 12 per cent and 9 per cent obtained grades A to C in 1993 and 1994, respectively. Although students performed satisfactorily in practical sessions, they were not sufficiently aware of the dangers of working in scientific laboratories.

55 In mathematics and computing, the students' written work was of an appropriate standard. Students developed a range of skills and techniques. Some needed a longer period than the length of the course to raise their performance to the standards required for success in external examinations. Examination results on vocational courses were good. There was a pass rate of 100 per cent and a retention rate of 83 per cent on the BTEC national diploma in computer studies. GCE A level results in mathematics and computing were 71 per cent and 50 per cent respectively, compared with national averages of 80 per cent and 63 per cent respectively. There has been a large variation in the pass rates from one year to the next. The pass rate in mathematics GCE A level has been 42 per cent, 11 per cent and 71 per cent in 1993, 1994 and 1995 respectively.

56 Most students on construction courses worked diligently. Their practical work was of a high standard. The portfolios of students on GNVQ courses contained work of good quality. The retention rates on all the construction courses averaged 79 per cent, which was above the average for the programme area nationally. There was, however, great variation in retention rates between courses. For example, 100 per cent of students completed the general construction apprenticeship training scheme but only 20 per cent finished the C&G painting and decorating course. Full-time NVQ craft students were timetabled for foundation GNVQ units to support their studies. Some found the additional work too demanding and irrelevant to their needs, while others thought it helped their understanding of the industry. Students lacked information technology skills and there were few examples of its use in their assignments.

57 The work of engineering students, and particularly those on more advanced courses was of a high standard. Their achievements were good. For example, of 25 students who enrolled on a two-year day-release higher national certificate programme in 1993, all but one completed the course, 20 passed at the first attempt and the remainder passed after resitting the examination. The majority of full-time students who succeeded either progressed to a course at a higher level or to appropriate employment. On some courses, notably the advanced level BTEC courses, retention rates were less satisfactory and pass rates were sometimes below national averages. Of 36 students originally enrolled on the national diploma course in engineering only 18 completed the course. Of those who left the course prematurely, approximately one-third transferred to other programmes and one-sixth went into employment not necessarily related to their studies.

58 Results in many business courses were high and on 11 the pass rate was 100 per cent. Results on courses for the Association of Accounting Technicians and the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy, at all levels, were higher than the national averages. Large numbers of students progressed to higher level courses within the college. Students' portfolios of work were of a high standard on all GNVQ and NVQ programmes. The work of some GNVQ intermediate students was exceptionally good. The students' projects for the National Examination Board for Supervisory Management certificate were impressively produced. They showed that the students had achieved a high degree of skill in research and problem solving. Many were confident that proposals, put forward in their projects, would be implemented at their place of work. There were poor results and retention rates on a few business courses. For example, pass rates for some units of the certificate in marketing course were low and results were poor on the NVQ level 3 course in business administration.

59 Pass rates were good on hotel and catering courses and, in many instances, they were 100 per cent. Retention rates were also high. On GNVQ and NVQ courses, the work in students' portfolios was of high

quality. Staff regarded action planning as vital to the students' progress and success. Students developed proficiency in core skills, such as information technology. The standard of work in travel and tourism indicated that the students had mastered a good understanding of the subject. For example, students on the NVQ course displayed a high level of competence in the college's travel centre. On completing their studies, these students gained employment in the travel and tourism industry or progressed to other courses in further or higher education. Results on travel and tourism courses were variable. They ranged from 7 per cent on the advanced certificate course for the Association of British Travel Agents and 13 per cent on the British Airways fares and ticketing course to 83 per cent on the BTEC national diploma in travel and tourism.

60 Students on all the health and community care courses were highly involved in their studies and were well motivated in class. They contributed to discussions purposefully and with confidence. Their written work was carefully organised and well presented. The students displayed confidence in their use of information technology and found this skill to be of value to them in their practical work. Pass rates on health and community care courses were above the national average. Retention rates were also good. Hairdressing and beauty therapy students developed high levels of practical skills. Pass rates on hairdressing and beauty therapy courses were good. In 1995, 80 per cent of students on the NVQ level 2 course in hairdressing, gained their award. Retention rates, however, have varied from between 61 per cent and 79 per cent during the last three years.

61 The students' achievements in art and design were good. In 1995, there was a 100 per cent pass rate on BTEC national diploma courses in graphic design, performing arts and popular music. Students' portfolios of work were of high quality. They contained a wide range of three-dimensional work in a variety of finishes, including ceramics that were often of a high standard. Students worked in a quiet, competent and professional manner. A large number of students progressed to other related courses. For example, all of last year's students on the national diploma course in popular music progressed to higher education.

62 Students on the C&G teacher training courses achieved good results. They demonstrated skill in information technology and used this skill to enhance the presentation of their work within their files. Between 20 and 30 per cent of the successful students progressed to the certificate in education course. GCSE and GCE A level modern foreign language students demonstrated their capacity to retain and use knowledge previously learnt. Their use of grammar and their ability to comprehend were generally good and sometimes exceptional. GCSE examination results in foreign languages were at or above the national figures for the sector. GCE A level results, with the exception of German, were 10 per cent above the national figure. There were poor retention rates on some part-time courses in languages and the average was 54 per cent. A high number of students chose not to take the final examination.

63 Students' work in English, geography, history, psychology, sociology and religious education was well presented and of generally good quality. Students approached their studies with enthusiasm. GCE A level results in English and sociology and GCSE results generally were above the national figures for further education colleges. More than 80 per cent of students on the access to higher education course successfully completed their studies. GCE A level results for geography, history and psychology were below the national averages and the retention rates were poor. For example, retention rates for geography and history were 33 per cent and 44 per cent, respectively.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

64 The college's strong commitment to providing courses of high quality is reflected in its mission statement, associated aims and in the terms of reference for the senior management team and the principalship. Responsibility for the quality assurance systems rests primarily with one of the vice-principals but it is shared between all academic staff and is specified in their job descriptions. A thorough quality assurance system for courses has been in existence since 1991. It is based upon four main principles which are stated in the college's policy on quality assurance. These are: development, accountability, openness, and review. The college's system for quality assurance is partially based on the processes used for quality assurance and control of its higher education provision. As a result of a review of its quality assurance system, begun in 1994, the college proposes modifications to its quality assurance arrangements. Following training of staff in the summer term, it is intended that quality assurance will extend to management and college services, with effect from September 1996.

65 The current system for assuring and improving the quality of courses includes processes for:

- validating new course proposals
- the annual monitoring and review of every course by course teams
- a comprehensive review of the operation of each course on a four or five-year cycle.

A staff handbook outlines the main features of these processes and for managers, there are also two detailed manuals of guidance on the quality assurance system. The data collected annually are sufficient to enable staff to make a detailed analysis of the performance of students on each course. Teaching teams are allowed to select aspects of their course they wish to examine in more detail. Mechanisms are provided for teams to raise issues related to improvement and to pursue these at various levels in the college. Recommended actions for improvement, following the identification of these issues, are reported and discussed at departmental meetings. If the actions required are beyond the scope of the department they are reported to the academic board. Many improvements to courses

have resulted from the quality assurance system. Its implementation, however, places a considerable workload on course managers. They sometimes fail to comply with all its requirements. The manuals are not sufficiently succinct to enable managers to refer to them quickly and easily.

66 The annual monitoring and review process places considerable importance on obtaining the views of students and others on the quality of the college's provision. Most course teams use questionnaires extensively to elicit students' opinions. These questionnaires enable students to comment on the college as a whole and on the detailed operation of their course. Students can also influence the improvement of their courses through their representation at course and departmental meetings. Students value these opportunities to give their opinions. In a few instances, insufficient completed questionnaires are returned to provide a representative sample of students' opinions. Few classes or groups of students are given any summary of their answers to questionnaires. For managers of courses on which many students are enrolled, the collection and analysis of responses to questionnaires are onerous tasks. Managers are currently considering establishing a system for the computerised analysis of responses. Initiatives to determine employers' opinions on the college through questionnaires have met with limited success. The views of parents are not systematically sought.

67 Many courses are subjected to quality assessment by their validating or awarding bodies. Reports from these bodies are considered by the course teams. The college's quality assurance system receives praise from some external bodies. For example, the Open University Validation Service entrusts the college with full power of self-validation. The college's system has been accepted by the Association of Prison Education Contractors as a model. The college's accreditation and training centre was one of the first in any college in the region to gain British Standards (BS) 5750 and International Standards Organisation (ISO) 9001 accreditation for its work. The procedures used in these systems have now been extended to cover all aspects of the services to business operations. The 55 services to business staff in the various departments have received ISO 9000 training.

68 Some aspects of the college's provision are covered by additional quality assurance processes. The procedures governing the internal verification of the NVQ and GNVQ courses have been recently revised to satisfy the requirements of the main awarding bodies. They are now more rigorous and detailed verification is carried out at various stages during the course. These processes will be applied to all vocational courses. The college was one of the first general further education colleges to subscribe to the advanced level information system that measures the extent of students' achievement by comparing their expected or actual performance in GCE A level examinations with the qualifications they had at the beginning of the course. Advanced level information system data are used by tutors in some initial and on-course guidance interviews. Students' actual results are analysed and discussed by most subject teams.

69 The college's charter covers a comprehensive range of services to students. It covers the college's relationships with the community and employers. The students' handbook contains an introduction to the charter. Students received a presentation on the charter during their induction to the college. The development of the college's first charter, and its subsequent revision, was carried out by a working group with membership drawn from across the college and which included the president of the students' union. Not all students are issued with the college's charter booklet. It lacks quantifiable standards by which the college could measure its performance. The procedures for students to make complaints are given in the students' handbook. No central record is kept of complaints made.

70 An appraisal system for full-time academic staff has operated since 1986. As a result of the third revision of the system in 1993, appraisal now includes observation of teaching. A modified appraisal process is to be extended to other full-time, non-teaching staff, and to those on fractional appointments. Part-time staff can elect to be appraised. The main appraisals are intended to take place over a two-year cycle and include an intermediate review interview. The system has lost momentum since the revision. At the time of the inspection, 36 per cent of the full-time staff had completed all or part of the appraisal cycle. The extent to which appraisal has been carried out varies widely between departments. Staff who have recently changed departments felt that delays in their appraisal meant that their new managers had insufficient knowledge of them. In 1992, the college made a commitment to achieve the Investors in People award. An initial survey showed much that needed to be done if the college was to qualify for the award. The target date for gaining the award was set for April 1996. This has recently been postponed to September 1996.

71 The range of staff-development activities is unusually broad. Academic staff are encouraged to undertake research or study for higher degrees; 27 teachers received financial support or timetable remission for this purpose in 1994-95. In the same year, 34 staff had secondments to industry, mainly funded by a Durham TEC initiative. An increasing number of support staff are funded to undertake development activities. Part-time staff are paid at half rate for attendance at training events. All new full-time staff take part in an induction programme and a modified version of this is available for part-time staff. Staff who take part in staff-development activities are required to report back on these. In many instances they write reports which are distributed to colleagues, or teams meet to share what has been learned. However, there is no formal system for evaluating the effectiveness and value of staff-development activities.

72 The college produced a self-assessment report in preparation for the inspection. This was developed through an extensive consultation exercise involving many staff and covering all the main aspects of the college's operation. Fourteen reports were produced covering nine curriculum areas and five cross-college aspects. Each report lists strengths and issues

under the framework of the Council Circular 93/28, *Assessing Achievement*, and includes an action plan to address the issues. The overall summary report, including grades for each aspect, was presented to the inspection team with individual reports in an annex. These and the general report contain thorough analyses and honest judgements on the provision. The judgements largely coincide with those of the inspection team.

RESOURCES

Staffing

73 Teaching and support staff are well qualified. Almost 79 per cent of full-time teachers have a graduate qualification or its equivalent and 32 per cent have higher degrees. Seventy-five per cent have a teaching qualification to certificate of education level or above. There is a requirement that new teachers without teaching qualifications will study for these in their first years of employment. Almost 50 per cent of full-time teachers have training and development lead body awards. Eleven per cent of full-time teachers have been appointed in the last two years.

74 Twenty-three per cent of the teaching is carried out by 353 part-time teachers. The proportion of part-time to full-time teachers varies considerably between departments. Part-time teachers generally attend course meetings and are paid to do so. The recruitment of part-time teachers and their subsequent supervision is undertaken by senior departmental staff. Some part-time teachers, for example in business studies and hairdressing, not only teach a large number of hours but they also have responsibilities for subjects.

75 Support staff make a valuable and effective contribution to a range of college activities. The role of many support staff is changing. A number of library and counselling staff have teaching qualifications which enable them to contribute to many academic initiatives. Cross-college services, such as maintenance and reprographics, informally establish deadlines by which they will complete work and these are generally met. Support staff are usually supervised by academic managers. They take part in the work of the department by attending boards of study and course meetings. In some areas of the college, however, support staff are not kept sufficiently informed of issues in departments to enable them to participate fully in their meetings.

76 Sixty-six per cent of the college's expenditure is allocated to staffing. The vice-principal (staffing and resources) has responsibility for implementing personnel policies. These are supplemented by a number of procedures or schemes, such as those relating to grievances and sickness. These are outlined in an effective staff handbook. Written guidance is given to those responsible for the management of part-time staff. The college maintains detailed staff records and is considering the purchase of software to support the analysis of these.

Equipment/learning resources

77 An audit of general teaching aids undertaken in 1991 led to improved levels of equipment across the college. There is general access to audio-visual and to closed-circuit television equipment at a studio at the Framwellgate Moor site. There are three similar studios at the Neville's Cross site. Teaching staff are efficiently supported by a well-equipped central reprographics unit. In some rooms, a lack of window blinds makes it difficult for overhead transparencies to be read and used effectively.

78 Specialist teaching areas are well supplied with appropriate teaching resources. In engineering, there is good modern equipment. This has been supplemented by some specialist equipment provided by major local employers. In travel and tourism, a travel agency fully licensed by the Association of British Travel Agents, has been established. It is partly sponsored by a local employer. In some parts of the college, specialist facilities are poor. In hairdressing, equipment is old and the furnishings are unsatisfactory. There is no overall policy on equipment replacement.

79 Information technology is managed centrally. There is a college policy on information technology development. The ordering of new information technology equipment is well co-ordinated across the college. There is a ratio of one workstation to nine students and a ratio of one machine to two staff. At the Framwellgate Moor site, workstations are grouped into specialist areas and each has a vocational focus. The five rooms that form the computer suite may be used by students at any time when the college is open. At the Neville's Cross site, the majority of computers are in specialist rooms and a small number are available in the library. There is insufficient access to such facilities for business students. All computers used by students are networked. However, many of those used by staff are not, and the lack of a network for staff has restricted the communication of management information.

80 Library facilities are good. Bookstock is extensive at both sites and reflects the needs of the students. There are areas in both libraries for students to work on their projects. The library's services are closely integrated with the college's information technology provision. Non-book facilities have been developed. The college is connected to the Internet. There are viewing areas in the library where compact disk read-only memory (CD-ROM) databases may be used. Library facilities for students on further education courses have been enhanced by those required by higher education students. There is, however a shortage of books and materials for nursery nurses.

81 The college has made significant progress in developing departmental learning centres. There are good centres in art and design, business studies and computer-aided design/computer-aided manufacture. A feature of the centres is the imaginative use of space and the location of teaching and support staff in these areas. Some of the recently-refurbished areas, such as those for science and modern foreign languages, have not yet been fully equipped.

Accommodation

82 The college has buildings on two main sites. The Neville's Cross site houses most of the higher education work. The main buildings date from the 1920s and are set in attractive well-maintained and well-landscaped grounds. Since 1945, further developments in accommodation have taken place to the rear of the original campus. The Framwellgate Moor site, located over two miles from Neville's Cross, houses most of the further education provision. The campus has been developed since the late 1940s. It has extensive and well-kept grounds. There are security officers on both sites for 24 hours a day for the whole year. There is an energy conservation programme. A range of other environmental issues are being considered. Signs to both sites and within buildings are inadequate. At some times of the day, lack of parking spaces results in obstructions caused by inappropriately parked cars. Some features of the college's residential accommodation for students are unsatisfactory. There is a shortage of storage space in classrooms and in the college generally.

83 The college has not produced a full and appropriate strategy on accommodation. Consultants have been recently commissioned to survey the condition of the buildings. The college has a maintenance programme in draft form. Some teaching and learning areas, such as those used for hairdressing and the learning centres, are overcrowded. Demountable classrooms at the Framwellgate Moor site are unsatisfactory. There is limited monitoring of accommodation usage.

84 Planned maintenance has a budget of £400,000, excluding minor work that is undertaken by the college's own staff. Such work is often carried out at the request of individual teachers. Levels of maintenance are poor in the students' residential accommodation, in parts of the library at the Neville's Cross site and in the areas used for the teaching of catering. The condition of the floor covering in many parts of the Framwellgate Moor site is poor.

85 Progress has been made in improving access for students with some categories of physical disability. Stair-lifts have been installed at the Framwellgate Moor site and this has opened up a range of vocational opportunities for these students. These facilities are supervised by support staff. Some areas, such as those used for the teaching of science, are inaccessible to students with significant physical disabilities.

86 Students at the Neville's Cross site have access to a range of recreational activities. The refectory areas and services are generally satisfactory. Students are offered a range of menus. The recreational and social facilities at Framwellgate Moor are poor. The changing rooms and shower facilities are inadequate and poorly maintained.

CONCLUSIONS AND ISSUES

87 The particular strengths of the college are:

- a wide range of courses available through varied modes of attendance
- good internal progression routes for students
- strong and effective teams at various levels
- sound procedures for financial management
- high-quality counselling, careers and learner support services
- generally well-motivated and responsive students
- high standards of students' work and good pass rates on vocational courses
- a high commitment to quality assurance systems for courses throughout the college
- well-qualified and experienced staff
- extensive library and information technology resources
- considerable improvement in the accessibility of much of the accommodation for students with physical disabilities.

88 If it is to build upon its existing strengths the college should:

- improve the effectiveness of its liaison with local comprehensive schools
- make the channels of communication between the board, principalship and college staff more effective
- develop the strategic planning processes
- improve the computerised management information system
- improve the retention rates on some courses
- monitor space usage and produce an up-to-date accommodation strategy.

FIGURES

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- 1 Percentage enrolments by age (as at November 1995)

 - 2 Percentage enrolments by level of study (as at November 1995)

 - 3 Enrolments by mode of attendance and curriculum area (as at November 1995)

 - 4 Staff profile – staff expressed as full-time equivalents (1995-96)

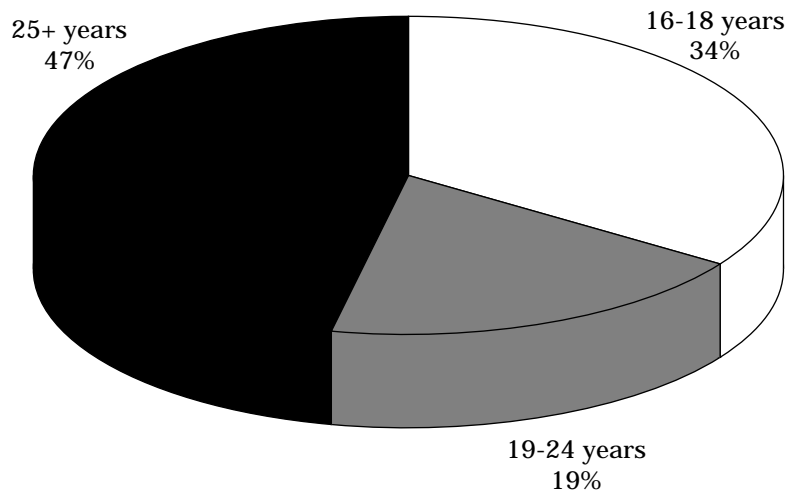
 - 5 Estimated income (for 12 months to July 1996)

 - 6 Estimated expenditure (for 12 months to July 1996)

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

Figure 1

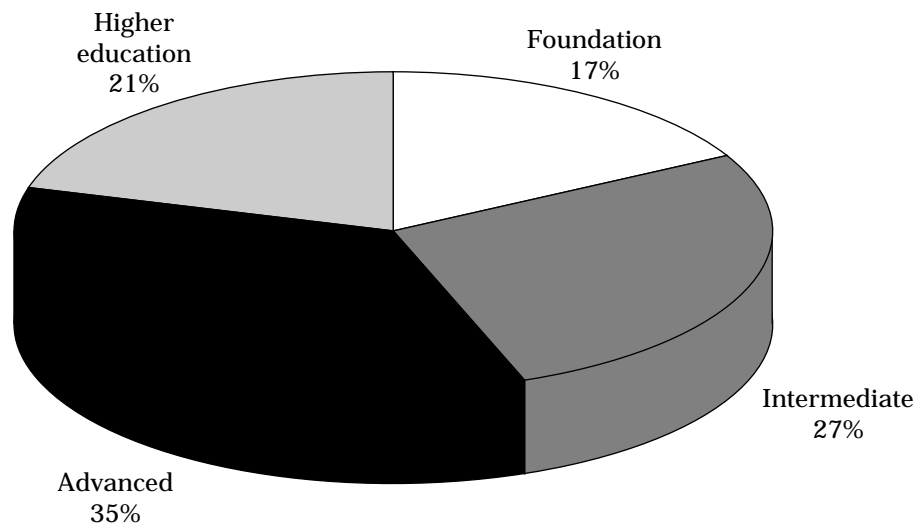
New College, Durham: percentage enrolments by age (as at November 1995)



Enrolments: 12,054

Figure 2

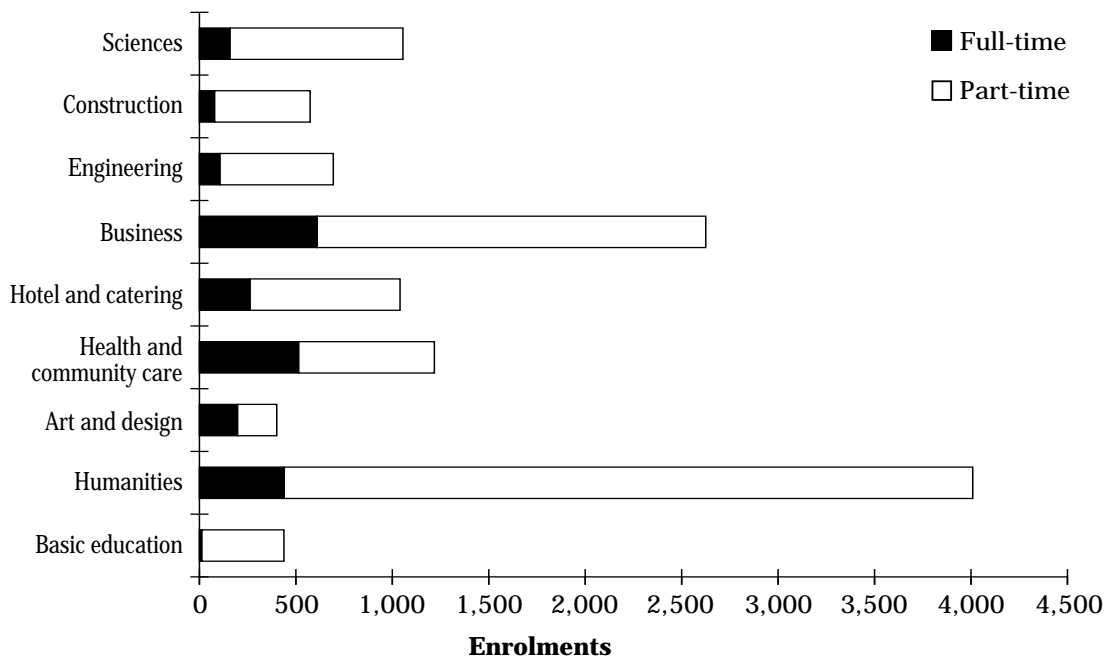
New College, Durham: percentage enrolments by level of study (as at November 1995)



Enrolments: 12,054

Figure 3

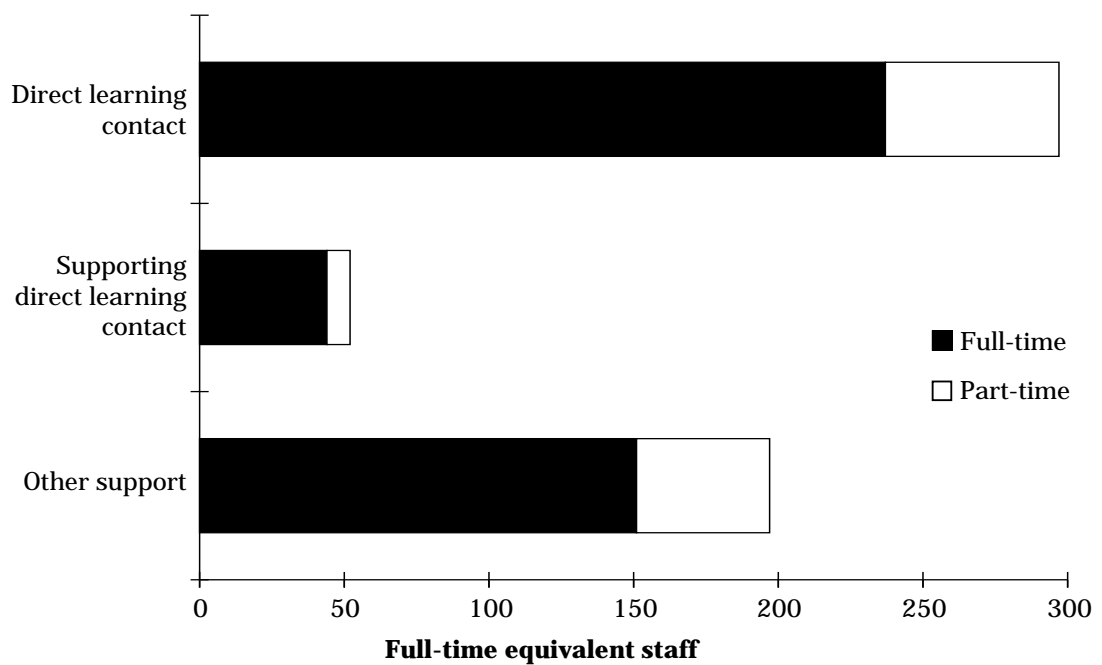
New College, Durham: enrolments by mode of attendance and curriculum area (as at November 1995)



Enrolments: 12,054

Figure 4

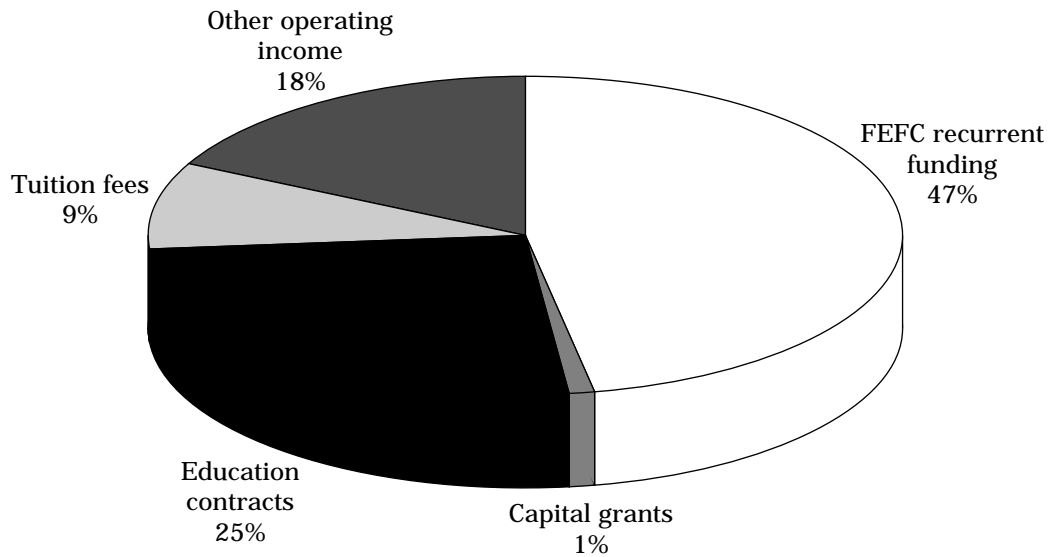
New College, Durham: staff profile – staff expressed as full-time equivalents (1995-96)



Full-time equivalent staff: 546

Figure 5

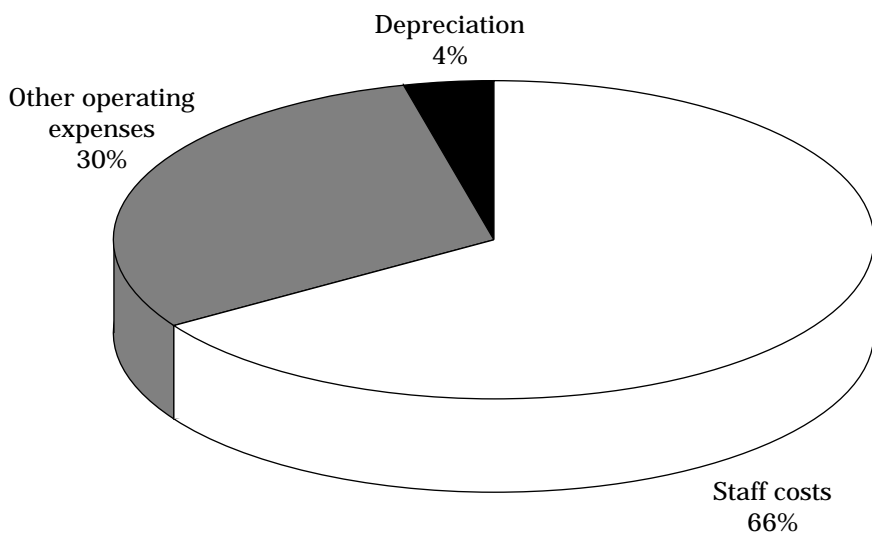
New College, Durham: estimated income (for 12 months to July 1996)



Estimated income: £17,649,000

Figure 6

New College, Durham: estimated expenditure (for 12 months to July 1996)



Estimated expenditure: £18,106,000

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