

**REPORT
FROM THE
INSPECTORATE**

Newham College of Further Education

March 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 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 36/96

NEWHAM COLLEGE OF FURTHER EDUCATION

GREATER LONDON REGION

Inspected September-December 1995

Summary

Newham College of Further Education in East London offers a broad range of courses to one of the most diverse communities in England. The majority of the courses are vocational courses leading to national qualifications. The college has strong commitments to widening participation and equality of opportunity. There are clear management procedures, a strategic planning process which involves all staff, and a well-designed quality assurance system which draws on internal inspection, including observation of teaching. Management at the level of the course team is not uniformly effective. Management information relating to students' records and other data returns are not always accurate or reliable. A central admissions service provides an efficient and comprehensive service to potential students. Students generally receive good pastoral guidance and support but the college is still developing a systematic approach to identifying and meeting students' needs for additional learning support. Courses are generally well planned. The quality of much of the teaching is good, though it is more variable on some courses than others. Many courses have low levels of attendance and retention. Students achieve well on most vocational courses and in a few GCE A level subjects. Examination results at GCSE and in some GCE A level subjects are below national standards. Accommodation and equipment, especially for computing, construction, engineering, hairdressing and beauty, are of a high standard.

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

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

Curriculum area	Grade	Curriculum area	Grade
Science and mathematics	2	Art and design	2
Computing	2	Humanities	3
Construction	2	English for speakers of other languages	3
Engineering	2	Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities	3
Business and management	3		
Health and community care including hairdressing and beauty	3		

INTRODUCTION

1 Newham College of Further Education was inspected in the autumn term of 1995. Inspectors spent a total of 77 days inspecting curriculum areas and cross-college provision. They visited 197 classes involving about 3,000 students and examined a broad range of students' work. Meetings were held with students, governors, representatives of the London East Training and Enterprise Council (TEC) and the local education authority (LEA), a local headteacher, employers, community representatives, senior managers, and teaching and support staff. Inspectors also had access to extensive documentation relating to the college and its courses.

THE COLLEGE AND ITS AIMS

2 Newham College of Further Education is a large general further education college in the London Borough of Newham in East London. It has three main campuses, at East Ham, Stratford, and Royal Docks and two smaller centres adjacent to local secondary schools at Little Ilford and Eastlea. It is in the London East TEC area. The college was formed in 1986 through the merger of East Ham College of Technology and West Ham College and was previously known as Newham Community College.

3 The college offers courses in all the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) programme areas except agriculture. The provision includes basic education, National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) and General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQs) at all levels, the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) and General Certificate of Education advanced level (GCE A level), access to higher education courses, courses leading to professional qualifications and higher education courses.

4 The London Borough of Newham is classified by the Department of the Environment Local Conditions Index as the most deprived borough in England. From 1981 to 1991, employment in the borough fell by 23 per cent compared with 5 per cent in the London East TEC area as a whole. All major sectors of the economy declined, the manufacturing sector by 51 per cent, and service industries by 14 per cent. Ninety per cent of companies in Newham now employ fewer than 25 people. According to the London Research Centre, the overall unemployment rate in October 1995 was 18.8 per cent compared with the Employment Information Unit's figure of 9.6 per cent for Greater London. Forty-two per cent of unemployed people had been out of work for more than a year and the unemployment rate for the 16 to 24 age group was 22 per cent. According to the 1991 census, 25 per cent of families in Newham were one parent families and 76 per cent of lone parents were unemployed. The borough's economic problems have led to a number of initiatives to regenerate the area, including a London Docklands project, the Lee Valley project funded by the European Union, a Stratford City Challenge project, and three single regeneration budget projects.

5 Newham is one of the most diverse communities in England. The population recorded by the 1991 census was 212,170 of whom 42 per cent were from minority ethnic communities compared with 20.2 per cent for Greater London as a whole. Of these, 23 per cent were Asian, 7 per cent Caribbean, 6 per cent African, and 6 per cent from other minority ethnic groups. Over 80 languages are spoken in Newham's schools. Data from the benefits agency and the health authority suggest that there are probably 15,000 refugees from at least 20 different countries living in Newham.

6 There are 14 secondary schools in the borough. Of these, eleven are 11 to 16 schools, two are 11 to 18 Catholic schools with a joint sixth form and one is a grant maintained 11 to 18 school. There is also a sixth form college. The LEA provides a community education service, which along with seven community organisations, obtains FEFC funds with the support of the college. The 1995 secondary school performance tables showed that the proportion of 15 year olds at schools in Newham achieving five or more GCSE grades A to C was 23.7 per cent compared with 43.5 per cent nationally. The secondary school truancy rate was 3.6 per cent compared with a 1 per cent average for England.

7 During the academic year 1994-95, there were 14,897 student enrolments at the college. There were almost equal numbers of men and women. Eighty per cent of the students lived in Newham. Eighty-one per cent were aged 19 or over; 55 per cent were aged 25 or over. Enrolments by age, by level of study and by mode of attendance and curriculum area are shown in figures 1, 2 and 3, respectively. Seventy-one per cent of students are from minority ethnic communities. Twenty-eight per cent of the students identified themselves as Black African or Caribbean, and 26 per cent as Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, or Chinese. During 1994-95 the college employed 599 full-time equivalent staff, of whom 474 were full time. A staff profile, with staff expressed as full-time equivalents is shown in figure 4.

8 The college executive of seven comprises the principal, two deputy principals, one of whom is designated the director of corporate services, an assistant principal (curriculum) and the three directors of faculties. The three faculties are business, management and humanities; technology; students and learning services. Each faculty is subdivided into a number of business or service divisions led by a business or service development manager. Programme areas and development activities have designated team leaders. The directorate of corporate services includes divisions for computer services, estates and technical services, finance and human resources.

9 The college's strategic plan includes a vision statement that identifies regeneration in East London as the key long-term aim to be achieved through investment, economic growth, and world-class education and training. The college's mission within this context is 'to invest in and provide excellence in education and training that best serve local people,

the regional economy, and achievement of the national targets for education and training'. The college's strategy to achieve this is to:

- widen participation through open access and serve customers with demand-led and flexible further education and training
- monitor continuously and improve the quality of all services
- invest in and develop college resources to the highest standards
- work in partnership with local, regional and European agencies to achieve social and economic regeneration in the area.

RESPONSIVENESS AND RANGE OF PROVISION

10 The college offers a wide range of education and training for school leavers, those in employment and adults returning to education. There is provision at foundation, intermediate and advanced levels in most vocational areas: computing; construction; engineering; business and management; leisure and tourism; health and care; hair and beauty; art, design and fashion; and music technology. The college currently offers four GNVQ programmes at foundation level, eight at intermediate level and six at advanced level. There are plans for there to be at least eight programmes, offered at all levels, by 1996-97. In 1995, students were following 22 GCE A level subjects and 11 GCSE subjects in the sciences, business and humanities. The college also has a range of programmes and services to meet the needs of students with physical disabilities and those with severe and moderate learning difficulties.

11 Staff are aware of the national targets for education and training. In line with its mission, the college has recently formulated a policy for core skills which is designed to increase opportunities for students to develop skills that contribute to the attainment of national targets for education and training.

12 The college's strategic objectives commit it to wider participation through open access. It guarantees applicants a place on a course appropriate to their needs and qualifications. When courses are full, if there is sufficient demand new streams are opened. Many of the existing courses are available for students attending part time or full time, in the day or evening. Students can alter their pattern of attendance if their personal circumstances change. Saturday courses are offered at two of the college's campuses. In order to encourage greater flexibility in the delivery of courses, the college has recently introduced criteria for flexibility against which courses will be judged by their success in achieving them. The criteria include flexible starting dates; opportunities for flexible and distance learning; choice of options; and accreditation of individual units.

13 For those students wishing to study at their own pace and in their own time, with some support from tutors, the college offers a small, home-study GCSE programme. At the time of the inspection, the programme had recruited 25 students. Opportunities for independent study are also

available in the flexible learning centres on the three main sites, one of which is open for 60 hours a week.

14 Adult students without traditional qualifications can follow access courses designed to prepare them for entry to higher education. The college offers 18 courses, linked to four universities, which are validated by the North and East London Access Federation. The college also runs a science degree foundation course through a franchising agreement with Kingston University and has eight reserved places at Surrey Institute of Art and Design for students successfully completing the Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) national diploma and foundation course. There are several effective links with other London universities, including the Newham Compact, which guarantees students resident in the local area an interview for entry to a course at the universities involved.

15 In 1994-95, the college recruited 1,508 day-release students and provided services to over 340 corporate customers. Faculties were set income targets to be achieved through full-cost recovery courses and consultancies; approximately £600,000 was earned last year. The college has well-established links with a number of major employers in the area such as British Rail, London Underground, Ford UK, and Kesslers International. These links have led to the provision of courses, assessment facilities and consultancies designed to meet the needs of individual employers. The college is the approved centre for British Rail welders in the South of England and the regional assessment centre for a national construction company.

16 In order to strengthen links with the many small businesses in the area, and to support local developments, the college and the local TEC have recently agreed to share the cost of a development worker for a business support and development centre in a commercial area of the borough dominated by small and medium-size companies run by members of the Asian community. It is currently providing support to the Asian Small Business Association by providing meeting space in the college and support from a member of staff. The college's relationship with the TEC is strong at both strategic and operational levels. The TEC considers the college to be progressive, open and responsive. The principal chairs the local action group concerned with the attainment of national targets for education and training, and faculty staff are members of TEC working groups and committees. In partnership with the TEC, the college was one of two London colleges which succeeded in gaining competitiveness funding for modern technology. The TEC recently provided financial support for the college to create an electronic prospectus.

17 The college has strong links with schools in the borough. The principal has regular meetings with local headteachers and many members of the college staff have well-established contacts with colleagues in the schools. Joint activities include exchange visits, taster sessions and link courses. The college has an open day in February, to which all the schools

are invited. It also produces a newsletter for pupils and their parents which is distributed throughout the borough. The college is an active member of the local education business partnership through which it is involved in a number of joint initiatives with local schools; for example, a borough-wide progression agreement which guarantees an interview for pupils from local schools who apply to follow a course at the college. The college has also established a framework for the recognition of records of achievement in further education.

18 Representatives of community groups indicated that the college is well known in the community. The college is involved in a number of innovative community initiatives and its strategic plan commits it to extend these. Projected developments include support for a housing project for young people, a training workshop aimed at the black community, a business support centre focused particularly on the Asian business community, and participation in adult training and education open days. The college has strong links with the borough's community education service with which it shares provision on four of its sites. The community education team has a franchise agreement with the college for the delivery of basic education and courses in English for speakers of other languages at a number of community venues. Funding from Stratford City Challenge has enabled the college to open a 'Get Ahead' shop in the local shopping centre, which provides an information centre and space for teaching.

19 The college has established a number of links with European Union partners over the past three years. With the help of external consultants, it has obtained funds which have enabled it to develop contacts with education and training organisations in 10 European countries. These contacts have provided opportunities for staff and students to make visits and for students to undertake work abroad as an integral part of their studies. Modules which address European and international issues are included in many courses.

20 The college has produced an impressive range of high-quality publicity materials, which includes the prospectus, a professionally-produced cinema commercial and some imaginative audio-visual presentations. These materials convey a clear sense of the college's corporate identity which is further reflected in other publications such as posters and newsletters, and individual course information sheets. The college's 1994 prospectus won second prize in the Heist awards for further education marketing and the 1995 annual report was highly commended.

21 Comprehensive data on the local labour market and local education provision are collected and used in curriculum planning. With the help of external consultants, the college has identified areas where there is scope for growth. Overall responsibility for marketing the college and its courses rests with a deputy principal, who chairs the college's marketing group, supported by a marketing co-ordinator. Marketing objectives are derived from the college's strategic plan and developed into operational plans at

faculty level. At present, the plans are of variable quality. Some areas of work within the faculties have developed productive contacts with industry, often through personal initiatives. Where this has happened, for example in the built environment, companies appreciate having a specialist member of staff as their point of contact and find that the college is responsive to their needs. In some curriculum areas there is potential to improve the range and number of contacts.

22 Equality of opportunity is given a high priority. The equal opportunities policy covers all areas of the college's work: service delivery, employment of staff and admissions. It has led to a range of initiatives including management training for staff from minority ethnic groups, courses for women only, the establishment of an inter-faith consultative committee and an advisory group to consider the needs of students with learning difficulties. Equal opportunities issues form an integral part of staff and student induction programmes. Responsibility for the implementation of the policy lies with the faculties and corporate services, and their actions are monitored by the college principal. At present there is only limited monitoring of the implementation or impact of these policies.

GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

23 The board of governors has a membership of 10. There are seven independent members, one co-opted member and the principal. At the time of the inspection, the member nominated by the local TEC had recently resigned and there was a vacancy. Five governors, including the chair, are women and one governor is from a minority ethnic community. The director of corporate services acts as the clerk to the board.

24 The governors are experienced and committed. Five were governors of the college before incorporation. Members bring with them experience of finance, education, quality assurance and aspects of work in the private and voluntary sectors.

25 An early decision was taken that the board should be small and that there should be no staff, student or community members. At incorporation, the number of governors was set at 12 but it was formally reduced to 10 at a meeting in September 1995. The board is considering a return to 12 members when the search committee can find appropriately experienced people. The board wishes to appoint additional members from minority ethnic groups.

26 The board meets at least six times each year. Four out of 12 meetings in the last two years were attended by only five or six governors. One meeting was rescheduled because it was inquorate. Average attendance during the past two years has been 71 per cent.

27 The board has six subcommittees: the audit committee, the remuneration committee, the search committee, the staff consultative committee, the students' consultative committee and the finance committee. The last two of these have been formed recently and have yet

to meet. All committees have clear terms of reference and include appropriate membership from within and from outside the board. With the exception of the students' consultative committee and the finance committee, they have met regularly and have been well attended. Full board and subcommittee meetings are carefully minuted. The principal has monthly meetings and more frequent telephone contact with the chair of governors. Members of the board and its committees receive comprehensive documentation and detailed agendas in advance of meetings. Information includes copies of the newsletters produced for staff and students at the college. Senior staff make regular presentations to the board to inform governors about their development plans and other curriculum and quality issues. Governors have a clear understanding of their responsibilities. They hold annual residential conferences at which they consider their own roles as governors, review the college's performance, engage in strategic planning and discuss major curriculum developments. These conferences have been addressed by leading figures in the FEFC and the college employers' forum. Some governors acknowledged that they would now benefit from a closer knowledge of the work of the college.

28 The focus in all college inspections is on the management of the curriculum and issues relating to educational provision. Other divisions of the FEFC examine matters relating to financial management and audit. However, inspectors noted that the board had previously had no finance committee. It was decided, at incorporation, that financial matters should be the remit of the whole board. The chair and members of the board consider that financial matters have been discussed adequately in full board meetings. However, the board has recently reversed its decision. A finance committee has been established although its terms of reference and membership have yet to be determined. It is intended that the finance committee will meet on the same days as the board, in advance of the board meeting, and that those governors who are not members of the finance committee may attend as observers. The college has been successful in several bids for funding from external agencies; these have contributed to a high level of capital expenditure over the past 12 months. Some members of the board reported that they had not always received sufficient, timely information on the detailed planning, implementation and evaluation of capital projects.

29 At incorporation, the college inherited a deficit of £181,000. Although the accounts have not yet been finalised, the college anticipates a surplus for 1994-95 of £2.9 million. The college has invested significant sums in accommodation and equipment over the past three years. The capital programme for 1993-95 was £7.5 million, of which £2.6 million was derived from partnership enterprises. Recurrent funding from the FEFC for 1995-96 is £15,358,893 representing 639,485 units. The average level of funding per funded unit of activity for 1994-95 was £24.71 compared with a median of £17.97 for general further education and tertiary colleges.

The college anticipates that it will achieve a higher level of activity than that for which it is funded. The average level of funding per funded unit of activity for 1995-96 is £23.09 compared with a median of £17.84 for general further education and tertiary colleges. The college anticipates that it will achieve a higher level of activity than that for which it is funded. At faculty level, efficiency indicators are used in the planning and approval of individual courses. The college's income and expenditure for the 12 months to July 1995 are shown in figures 5 and 6.

30 The corporate plan provides a broad curriculum framework which guides the college in fulfilling its mission. The college has developed an admissions policy, assessment strategy, core-skills policy and learner support strategy which have been ratified. Each faculty contributes to the corporate plan through its own business development plan which is formulated after consultations at all levels. Staff understand the strategic-planning process and support the corporate objectives.

31 Since incorporation, the college has undergone a major restructuring to ensure that there is more efficient and effective use of resources. The curriculum areas have been reorganised. Lines of management are clear and staff understand them. Meetings of the executive, at which reports from the faculties and corporate services are considered, are scheduled to take place each week; minutes identify the actions to be taken and the personnel responsible. Each faculty director has three assistant faculty directors who are responsible for functions such as curriculum and staff development, marketing or resources. Business development or service managers are responsible for a group of programmes or support services. In the faculty of technology and the faculty of business, management and humanities, there are business development managers for programme areas. The faculty of student and learning services has service development managers responsible for: admissions and guidance; registry and learning support; essential skills; and learner support. Communication between college managers is good.

32 Business development managers are directly responsible for the planning and delivery of the curriculum and for managing a group of course team leaders. In the areas of construction, engineering, and art and design, course teams are managed well. Management at course team level in hairdressing and beauty, English for speakers of other languages and in provision for students with learning difficulties is less effective. GCSE provision is not co-ordinated effectively and the co-ordination of GCE A levels should be strengthened.

33 Team management has been addressed at a number of staff conferences. There is an annual conference for all staff, termly conferences for all managers, including business team leaders, and regular residential conferences for the college executive. The conferences have covered key issues relating to corporate planning, curriculum change and quality assurance.

34 Each of the three faculties has an assistant faculty director with responsibility for the management of curriculum issues. They are members of the college curriculum development group, led by the assistant principal (curriculum). The group's terms of reference require it to advise the executive and the academic board on: the planning, development and implementation of the college curriculum; policies and frameworks to support the curriculum; related staff development; and the dissemination of good practice in the curriculum. It sets up short-term project groups to introduce new curriculum initiatives such as core skills, GNVQs and NVQs. The academic board of 20 includes senior managers, the three assistant faculty directors for curriculum, elected representatives of teaching staff and support staff from each of the three faculties, and three student representatives. Meetings are held termly and are well attended. The academic board makes recommendations to the college executive and reports are forwarded to the governing body.

35 Faculty directors control budgets for full-time and part-time staff, and for consumables. They delegate the consumables budget to business development managers. Finances are allocated on the basis of a variety of formulae, with some degree of weighting for particularly expensive provision. Rules and procedures relating to financial management within the college are made explicit to managers in a comprehensive document. Managers generally understand the method of allocation of funds to the faculties and to individual curriculum areas and are content that it is equitable. Reporting of financial information to budget holders is clear, accurate and timely. Targets for enrolment have been achieved or exceeded in all areas, with the exception of construction.

36 Systems for delivering reports on students' enrolment, attendance, retention and results and other data returns are inadequate to cope with the demands for information from internal and external users. Reliable, accurate and comprehensive data on students are not available to managers. A student record project team was set up in June 1995 to develop an effective system for 1995-96, and to identify electronic systems to meet the shortcomings. There is now a clear college-wide system for recording early withdrawal from courses. Procedures now in operation in the technology faculty, are providing clear information on staff deployment, student attendance and room utilisation. The college has recently commenced installation of an electronic registration system and it is currently refining the reports which it will generate for managers and teachers.

STUDENTS' RECRUITMENT, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

37 There has been considerable investment in staffing, physical resources and the training of existing staff to improve the arrangements for the recruitment, guidance and support of students. Although some aspects of these arrangements are not fully developed, students generally have access to a strong and effective network of support, which is the responsibility of the faculty of student and learning services.

38 A new, well-staffed central admissions service provides a flexible and comprehensive service for applicants from the moment they enquire about courses to the time they enrol. Under the college's policy for open access, students are able to enrol at points throughout the year. Those who are unable to find a suitable course at the college are helped to find one at another institution. Information is available to personal callers at both the main college sites and at the 'Get Ahead' shop at Stratford, as well as by telephone. The information centres are spacious and attractive. Initial guidance is provided by three guidance officers, while potential applicants who require more detailed advice are referred to the careers service. There were a few examples of students being placed on inappropriate courses; for example, on NVQ level 1 administration and GCSE foundation courses. All applicants to courses, such as GCE A level, which have set entry requirements are interviewed by specialist teaching staff. Effective liaison between admissions staff and the faculties ensures that procedures operate smoothly. During a week in early September 1995, staff dealt with 4,716 applications for admission. Staff were efficient, courteous and welcoming; careers officers were in attendance and multilingual staff assisted applicants who needed help with their English. During this week, the college provided free transport between sites. Support staff are trained in the admissions procedures, which are well documented, closely monitored and evaluated. Information officers are attempting to identify reasons why a number of enquirers subsequently fail to apply to take a course at the college.

39 There are good, well-organised sources of support for students once they have enrolled. Cross-college facilities, organised by the faculty of student services, include a students' advice service, careers guidance, learning support, and 'Student Life' which organises extra-curricular activities and provides support for the students' union. Four advisers, two of whom have professional counselling qualifications, provide counselling, advice to students on practical matters such as finance and welfare, and support for tutors in group tutorials. A refugee advice and guidance centre in the 'Get Ahead' shop in Stratford opens in January 1996. The careers officers who currently advise students at the college are to be joined one day a week by an officer from the Employment Service, who will bring details of job vacancies.

40 Extra curricular activities, organised through 'Student Life', are successfully extending students' experiences. Cultural and other recreational activities include 13 different sports. A large furnished room, which serves as a common room from 11.00 to 14.00 hours, is booked by groups for activities, such as drama, at other times. The officer responsible for organising 'Student Life' is co-ordinating a drive to increase the representation of students in college decisions. This has met with an enthusiastic response from students. The students' council comprises 125 course representatives, 21 of whom have been elected to campus committees.

41 The college lacks systematic procedures for identifying and meeting students' needs for additional learning support. Initial screening tests are being piloted. At the time of the inspection, about 2,200 full-time students had been tested, approximately half of whom were identified as needing additional support. Assistance is provided for small groups in mainstream classes or in supplementary sessions. Other students are referred to, or voluntarily attend, the open study centres at each campus, where mathematics, numeracy and literacy support are delivered by specialist staff. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive individual support. Students who are assessed as needing learning support are helped to draw up individual action plans; support staff liaise with their personal tutors on their progress in fulfilling them. At the time of the inspection, about 300 students had drawn up their individual action plans.

42 There is effective guidance and good support for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities within mainstream course provision. At the time of the inspection, there were 166 students with declared disabilities, many of whom needed no additional support; nine students were using wheelchairs. About 60 students were being supported within mainstream classes by a team of four support workers and two professionally-trained communicators. Of these students, 26 had hearing impairment, 10 visual impairment, 10 learning difficulties and 7 dyslexia or other specific learning difficulties.

43 The college provides some financial and other practical assistance for students in need. No tuition fees are charged to British or European Union residents on full-time courses, and fees are waived for part-time students who would normally pay concessionary rates. The access funds of £47,977 helped 606 students in 1994-95, mainly with contributions towards the purchase of books and essential equipment, but also towards such costs as transport and childcare. This year, the college has provided an additional students' support fund of £50,000 to meet similar requests. Fifty-four free childcare places are available in the nurseries at East Ham and Stratford for children under five and there is some provision at other centres. There is a long waiting list for places.

44 All students receive an induction to the college and to their courses. Teachers have been trained and issued with written guidance on what should be included in induction programmes. Most induction sessions were well prepared and effective although some failed to motivate the students. The induction period is used to ensure that students are enrolled on the appropriate course at the correct level. Most course changes occur at this stage and there are clearly-documented procedures for effecting and registering changes. Any changes of course at a later date entail students formally leaving their existing course and re-enrolling on another, following central admissions procedures. The college has a policy for developing accreditation of students' prior learning and experience where this is relevant to their study. Some divisions have made progress on this, although implementation is generally at an early stage.

45 The tutorial system, which was developed with partial funding from the technical and vocational education initiative, is the cornerstone of the support students receive. At least two hours' tutorial time a week is allocated to each full-time course, one hour of which is devoted to group sessions, the other to individual interviews. A useful handbook, in the form of a loose-leaf file, is given to all students. It contains essential college information, specific course information and a 'student organiser' comprising a diary, timetable, action planners and progress review forms. A digest of the information is also available in French, Somali, Bengali and Urdu. Within a common framework, tutors can vary the content of group sessions. In practice, some course teams decide on a shared timetable; for example, science students at Stratford, drawn from several groups, attended a useful session on interview techniques, organised by careers staff, in which they watched video recordings and participated in role-play. Students value the individual tutorials, in which their progress is reviewed against their personal action plans. Group tutorials are less well received, except when they are seen as directly relevant; for example, helping them to apply for places in higher education. Some tutors do not use the allocated tutorial time well. The parents of students under the age of 18 are kept informed of their progress through written reports and consultation evenings. Tutors are expected to monitor attendance and behaviour but procedures for following up absences are not consistently followed.

46 All part-time students have a personal tutor and tutorial time is allocated according to their needs. Half an hour's tutorial time a week, which is devoted to one-to-one sessions, is particularly valuable in supporting adult students for whom returning to an educational environment is daunting and among whom there has often been a high rate of non-completion.

47 Now in its third year, a students' mentoring scheme, run by a full-time co-ordinator, enables first-year students to benefit from the support of trained, paid students on the second year of the same course. In 1994, 22 second-year mentors worked with a total of 130 students from six different courses.

48 The college has good security arrangements. A number of uniformed guards are vigilant, highly visible, courteous and helpful. Each site is overseen by a senior member of staff who is the campus manager. Students said that they felt secure within the campuses.

TEACHING AND THE PROMOTION OF LEARNING

49 The average attendance in the 197 lessons observed during the inspection was 71 per cent. The strengths of teaching clearly outweighed the weaknesses in 59 per cent of the lessons; in about 31 per cent there was a balance of strengths and weaknesses; in 9 per cent there were weaknesses which outweighed strengths. The following table shows the grades given to the teaching sessions observed.

Teaching sessions: inspection grades by programme of study

Programmes	Grade	1	2	3	4	5	Totals
GCE AS/A level		4	9	10	1	0	24
GCSE		4	4	3	1	1	13
GNVQ		4	11	11	0	1	27
NVQ		5	15	10	1	0	31
Other vocational		15	26	9	4	0	54
Basic education		3	11	9	4	4	31
Access to higher/ further education		1	1	6	0	1	9
Other		1	3	4	0	0	8
Total		37	80	62	11	7	197

50 Most courses offered coherent programmes and had schemes of work with clearly-defined aims. Some schemes lacked sufficiently detailed objectives and timescales to ensure that the aims were achieved. The schemes of work were sometimes communicated to the students.

51 Teachers were knowledgeable and most had established good relationships with their students. The majority of lessons were well planned and provided learning activities appropriate to students' needs although the quality of teaching varied widely, especially on basic education, access and GCSE courses. At best, the work was challenging and interesting. In less effective lessons teachers failed to take adequate account of the different abilities of students in the group or to allow students sufficient opportunities to raise questions or discuss issues. Some lessons were dull; for example, the lack of variety in some two-hour and three-hour sessions meant that students became bored well before the end of time. Attendance was poor in some lessons, especially lessons in computing, business, humanities, English for speakers of other languages and on part-time construction courses. Late arrivals disrupted the beginning of some classes.

52 The standard of students' written work was usually appropriate to the level of the course. Marking was generally thorough and fair although tutors lacked a consistent approach to grading and the correction of technical errors. The quality of teachers' comments varied both within the same subject and across programme areas. Some teachers gave helpful advice on how students could improve their work; others gave few or no written comments. In recognition of these inconsistencies, the college has developed a new assessment strategy.

53 Teaching in sciences and mathematics was enthusiastic and effective, and there was a strong emphasis on practical work. Schemes of work were made known to students, lessons were well managed and work was

conducted at an appropriate pace. The marking of students' work was detailed and in all but a few cases students received appropriate feedback. Aids to learning, such as overhead transparencies and materials for students' use, were of variable quality.

54 Most lessons in computing and information technology were well planned. Students had suitable opportunities to develop their knowledge, understanding and skills. In one interesting and unusual lesson on computer hardware, students were working in groups, dismantling and re-assembling obsolete computers to help them recognise the various components and understand their functions. In some classes, the range of graded exercises was inadequate to cater for the diverse needs of students, which meant that some were making slow progress. Teachers generally made good use of a variety of teaching aids, although in a few classes students spent too much time copying notes.

55 On construction courses, copies of a well-designed work plan which provided a weekly breakdown of topics to be covered were available to students and teachers took account of students' differing levels of ability and previous experience. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities were well supported. For example, in a theory lesson on the handling of brickwork, those with language difficulties were helped to contribute to class discussion; students used a supply of model bricks to practise building at various levels; the lecturer illustrated different examples with photographs and the lesson was followed by practical work, building full-scale models.

56 The planning of courses and lessons was equally effective in engineering. Practical and theoretical work were integrated effectively. The teaching was generally of a high standard. Technical assistants were used effectively in practical sessions, and students produced work of an appropriate standard. In music technology, the enthusiasm and knowledge of the teachers helped to motivate students. Teaching in welding took careful account of students' expressed interests and needs.

57 Business and management lessons were well prepared and activities were based on well-structured schemes of work. However, the quality of the teaching varied. Some teachers involved students in lively discussions. For example, in one NVQ class students were preparing for examinations of the Association of Accounting Technicians; they were discussing and critically evaluating information in order to develop their understanding of ideas with which they might otherwise have had difficulty. Some other lessons relied too heavily on the teachers' exposition or on poor questioning. This failed to encourage students to provide the detailed answers which would have helped them develop their ideas. In some lessons, the pace of work, especially in two-hour sessions, was far too slow.

58 Many lessons in health and community care, including hairdressing and beauty, were well planned and clearly delivered. Students experienced

a variety of learning activities. Health and community care lessons were related to students' vocational goals and included the teaching of skills which would enable students to learn independently. The programmes included substantial and appropriate work experience, but some full-time students studying for NVQ awards at the same time as the Council for Awards in Children's Care and Education felt inadequately prepared for the demands of it. A minority of lessons were too theoretical and failed to engage the attention of all students. In hairdressing and beauty, teaching was well organised and occasionally lively, but students were generally required to work at a uniform pace, which was unsuitable for some. Generally, students had insufficient opportunity to develop the skills required to work on their own or to use the appropriate information technology for stock control, client records and bookings.

59 There was a high standard of teaching and practical work in art and design. Learning was almost entirely through assignments and projects. The success of this approach was due to the clarity of the instructions given at the outset of the session, which usually included aims and objectives and criteria for assessment. A few sessions were inadequately prepared and lacked a clear focus. These weaknesses were particularly apparent in the new pre-foundation level course, the 'art workshop'.

60 Some humanities lessons were purposeful and the work challenging; others were laborious and uninspiring. Most courses had well-developed schemes of work. For example, GCE A level and GCSE English courses had common schemes of work divided into week-by-week activities. They were followed by all teachers and this ensured a consistent approach and appropriate coverage of the syllabus content. The GCE A level scheme of work and homework plan was given to the students. Some lessons in humanities failed to take account of students' differing levels of ability or previous experience. Some teachers did not have a high enough expectation of their students and their teaching failed to stretch students intellectually. Paired work and group work were used to good effect in GCE A level languages. In English literature classes, teachers made good use of videos to show extracts from plays or dramatised novels in order to illustrate specific points which were subsequently discussed in a relevant and focused way. Marking was often thorough. Positive and constructive comments on how to improve written work were appreciated by students. However, errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar were not always corrected.

61 The curriculum in English for speakers of other languages provided opportunities for students to develop and practise skills which enabled them to progress successfully to vocational programmes. Courses were well planned although the planning for individual lessons was sometimes less thorough. The quality of lessons varied. Some teaching was of a high standard and students were well motivated. Other teaching failed to take account of the mixed abilities and varying language skills within the group

or the changing composition of the group as a consequence of new enrolments. Teaching materials were of variable quality and limited use was made of visual and other teaching aids.

62 There is a wide-ranging programme for students with moderate and severe learning difficulties. It is well organised, but offers limited opportunity for accreditation by nationally recognised awarding bodies. Lessons were of variable quality. Some of the work was innovative and creative but teachers sometimes failed to set learning goals or to identify and record what students had learned. Students were often engaged in group activities. Teaching methods and learning materials took too little account of the varying needs of individual students.

STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENTS

63 In most teaching sessions, students appeared well motivated and spoke enthusiastically about their courses and the college. They were generally achieving appropriate levels of knowledge and understanding. In practical sessions in sciences, art and design, construction and engineering students was developing appropriate skills. There were few opportunities for first-year students of hairdressing to practise on clients or fellow students. Students on the foundation course in art and design produced life drawings of a consistently high standard and design students presented excellent finished designs. Students on the pattern cutting courses were achieving high standards in machine sewing. Many of the part-time students on the NVQ in childcare produced work of a high calibre. In one class, for example, a student working on the use of stories for children produced her own, simple story with a strong narrative. Science and mathematics students displayed a good understanding of the subject. Students on language courses were developing confidence through speaking and writing in the languages they were studying.

64 The development of core skills and study skills was inconsistent although there were examples of good practice both in vocational studies, where such skills were an integral part of the coursework, and in other areas of work where core skills were taught separately. On the GNVQ information technology courses and on language courses, students were acquiring good study skills and examination techniques. On courses in construction, students made good use of integration of information technology; they were able to apply their knowledge to individual projects and this was helping them to solve a variety of problems associated with mathematics, drafting techniques, design, planning and presentation. On health and community care courses, and hairdressing and beauty courses, achievements in information technology and application of number were inadequate. In some GNVQ health and social care sessions, students did not understand what was expected of them in developing their core skills. In some vocational course sessions on theory, students were failing to develop essential study skills, including the taking of notes. After an audit of provision, the college's core-skills policy was produced in

the summer of 1995 and introduced at a workshop for key specialist and vocational teaching staff in October. College targets for achievement in communication, application of number and information technology have now been set.

65 Effective group work is a feature of many courses, including courses in art and design, business studies, computing and English as a foreign language. The work was well planned; tasks were clearly described and understood by students. Students were often encouraged to discuss issues, develop organisational skills and support each other as members of a team. Students prepared topics to present to the full group, and this prompted positive and relevant discussion. The presentations by students on access courses and English courses were of a high standard.

66 Retention rates supplied during the inspection show that a significant number of students leave their course prior to completion. In 1994-95, the overall retention rate for vocational courses was 73 per cent, compared with 74 per cent in 1993-94 and 78 per cent in 1992-93. Retention rates have improved on two-year courses but dropped on one-year courses. On the two-year full-time BTEC courses, there has been a significant growth in provision and retention rates vary significantly. For example, enrolments on the national diploma in business and finance have increased from 83 in 1991-93 to 169 in 1993-95, whilst retention has reduced from 83 per cent to 74 per cent. There are some courses on which retention is over 90 per cent; for example, the BTEC higher national diploma in graphic design, City and Guilds of London Institute (C&G) welding, NVQ plastering and carpentry and joinery. However, some courses have poor retention levels. The two-year full-time BTEC national diplomas in computer studies and construction both had retention rates of only 47 per cent. Of the 97 students who enrolled on the one-year full-time GNVQ intermediate course in business studies, fewer than half completed. Retention rates on the NVQ levels 1 and 2 in business administration are just over 50 per cent. The extensive range of part-time courses has a similar pattern of retention rates ranging from 100 per cent in some courses, including first aid at work, mechanical services, electrical installation and plumbing, to below 50 per cent in painting and decorating, and advanced clothes making. Figures for the two-year GCE A levels are unreliable, but the one-year GCE A level and GCSE indicate retention rates of 48 per cent and 55 per cent, respectively, in 1994-95. Retention is poor on preparatory courses in English for speakers of other languages and on the access course.

67 Eighty-two per cent of the 145 students aged 16 to 18 in their final year of study on the vocational courses included in the Department for Education and Employment's 1995 performance tables were successful. This places the college among the middle third of colleges in the further education sector on this performance measure. There are several vocational areas where examination pass rates are high. All students entered for the BTEC first diploma in construction and the national diploma

in social care were successful in obtaining their qualification. In computer studies, foundation studies in art and design, graphic design and social care over 90 per cent of students entered for BTEC first and national diplomas achieved their qualification. Pass rates for students completing part-time and full-time C&G courses are generally good. Over 80 per cent of students studying hairdressing, electrical installation, fabrication, welding, photography, cookery and cosmetic make-up gained an award. All students on NVQ programmes in heating and ventilation achieved their qualification. On the one-year BTEC course in software engineering, retention has improved and 85 per cent of students passed their examinations. Other levels of achievement are less satisfactory. For example, only 48 per cent of students entered for the BTEC higher national certificate in computer studies and only 56 per cent of students entered for the BTEC national diploma in construction were successful in gaining the full award. Of the 81 students attending the English as a foreign language proficiency course, 33 entered for the examination of whom 22 passed, which is just below the pass rate for the United Kingdom. Students following English courses for speakers of other languages and students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieved well on those courses which were nationally accredited.

68 GCE A level and GCSE courses account for only 5 per cent of the college's students. In 1994-95, there were 564 entries for GCE A level in 22 subjects. The 153 students aged 16 to 18 who entered for GCE advanced supplementary (AS) and GCE A level examinations in 1994-95 scored, on average, 3.0 points per entry. This places the college among the bottom third of colleges in the further education sector on this performance measure, based on the data in the 1995 performance tables published by the Department for Education and Employment. The college's GCE A level results for students of all ages are more mixed; results have fluctuated over the last three years. GCE A level passes for two-year students in 1995 at grades A to E in chemistry, accounting, economics, psychology, sociology and history were above the provisional national results for general further education colleges. Pass rates in GCE A level examinations at grades A to E in English, physics, biology, law and politics were below the national figures. Results for one-year students are generally poor. Of the 405 students enrolled for GCSE courses in 1994-95, 33 per cent achieved grades A to C, which is below the provisional national figures for general further education colleges. Although the college is aware of the low attainments of school leavers in Newham, it is currently not doing any detailed analysis of the value added by the college to students' achievements.

69 Students have been successful in winning regional and national awards including the Building Employers' Confederation award of merit, the Design and Art Directors' Student award for exhibition design, and the Sales Promotion Consultants' Association best junior creative director award.

70 The college has only recently developed systems for the collection of data on the destinations of full-time students. In 1995, 419 students gained places in higher education. One hundred and twelve out of 151 students completing access courses progressed to higher education.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

71 The strategic plan commits the college to continuous monitoring and improvement of the quality of all its services. A deputy principal has overall responsibility for quality assurance. A quality systems co-ordinator analyses information and produces reports for the executive, the academic board and external agencies. The standards and performance subcommittee of the academic board undertakes the detailed development and review of policies and systems. The academic board advises the principal on quality assurance of the curriculum and cross-college services. Measurable service standards for human resources, customer services, estates and security have been devised by support staff working in these cross-college functions.

72 The internal course approvals system ensures that new courses are designed within the college's curriculum framework and that the resource implications are identified and considered. The major instrument for assuring the quality of the curriculum is the comprehensive course review, evaluation and development process, now in its second full year of operation. Course teams are required to record and discuss a range of performance indicators at points throughout the year. These include students' achievements, enrolments, completions and destinations, external verifiers' reports and responses to two surveys of students' perceptions of their courses. The process culminates in a review and action plan every year. A summary of each division's findings and action plans is presented to the faculty's curriculum committee, where the overall findings are drawn together as part of the faculty's planning process. Each faculty reports its findings and action plans to the executive and the academic board.

73 The system of course review, evaluation and development is well designed and is valued by course team leaders, who find it helpful and workable. Benefits arising from the system, identified by team leaders, include: raised expectations amongst students of the quality of service provided; a better focus on the sense of equal partnership between staff and students; and improvements in timetabling, marketing and the fair distribution of the access fund. The college has already identified some weaknesses in the system, which it is addressing. The quality of the course reports is variable. In some, the analysis of data on recruitment, retention and achievement is not sufficiently detailed, and the action-planning is imprecise. The reviews of GCSE courses and of the GCE A level course in humanities fail to provide sufficient analysis and related action points at the level of individual subjects. The monitoring of the course review process, currently the responsibility of the business development

managers, is not sufficiently rigorous or consistently implemented across the college.

74 A system for the internal inspection of teaching and the promotion of learning was introduced during 1994-95. This was based on 60 standards covering course management, professionalism, effective team membership, teaching styles and practices, the measuring of students' achievements, staff-student relationships and the pastoral/guidance role. A recent revision of the standards has resulted in an additional section on managing retention and achievement. Each internal inspection was carried out by a team of staff from within the faculty concerned, accompanied by an external consultant. Grades, based on the FEFC's inspection grading system, were awarded to the curriculum areas inspected. More than 150 lessons were inspected in 11 curriculum areas and interviews were carried out with staff and students. The internal inspection resulted in detailed quality audit reports for each curriculum area which were considered at a conference for senior staff and presented to the board of governors. The internal inspection was a valuable addition to the quality assurance process itself. It uncovered many issues directly related to the quality of teaching and learning. One faculty has responded by holding sessions to encourage the adoption of new teaching methods and the development of better teaching materials.

75 Students have a number of opportunities to express their views on the college's provision. The surveys of students' perceptions include questions on recruitment, induction, teaching and the assessment of work. The results of the surveys are published in a newsletter for students. Surveys of users' views are also carried out in the learning support areas. Clear information is provided for the students on how to make a complaint. Good records are kept of each stage of the processing of the complaint and progress is monitored to ensure a satisfactory resolution. The letters sent to complainants are courteous, helpful and clear, reflecting the college's view of students as valued customers. There is an attractive, simple college charter for students, which is included in the students' handbook and is prominently displayed about the college. The charter is underpinned by a range of standards, which are monitored by the quality systems co-ordinator.

76 All full-time staff were appraised between 1993 and 1995. Appraisal of teachers may include observation of teaching, but does not always do so. As an outcome of appraisal, staff-development needs are identified and related to corporate objectives. The college has registered for the Investors in People award which it expects to achieve during 1996. The staff-development budget in 1994-95 was £265,500, which represents 1.2 per cent of the college's total expenditure. A manager has been appointed to provide central monitoring and evaluation of staff development. The college has identified priorities which include management training, the development of more effective methods of teaching and learning, and training for assessors' and verifiers' awards. The sum of £40,000 was

retained for a central programme of staff development. The rest of the budget was devolved to faculties. Faculties devise their own staff-development plans based on needs identified during the staff-appraisal process, course review and evaluation, and internal inspection of teaching and learning.

77 The college's self-assessment report records its achievements and the areas requiring improvement in an honest and analytical way. It reflects the effectiveness of the institution's quality assurance procedures. The college had already taken note of the strengths and weaknesses identified during the early part of the inspection and has set itself corresponding standards for improvement. Governors and managers have begun to take action designed to improve retention, attendance and examination results. The faculty quality audits contained detailed recommendations and targets for improvement, many of which had been addressed by the time of the inspection.

RESOURCES

Staffing

78 Following a restructuring which reduced the number of posts by 120, the college now employs 599 full-time equivalent staff. There are 374 full-time equivalent teaching staff, of whom over 70 per cent are on new contracts, and 225 full-time equivalent support staff. Thirty-six per cent of the teachers are women and 64 per cent men. About 25 per cent of teachers are from minority ethnic groups. One per cent are registered disabled. The student:staff ratio for the college is 14:1.

79 Teachers are generally well qualified and experienced. They provide an adequate range of expertise for the programmes offered. Forty-nine per cent of full-time teachers have first degrees; 42 per cent have postgraduate qualifications; 72 per cent have teacher training qualifications. At present, 110 teachers have assessor training to Training and Development Lead Body standards. Twelve teachers have an internal verifier award; 26 more are undergoing training and assessment. At present, there is only one person qualified to accredit prior learning but a further 10 are working towards the qualification. Over 87 per cent of teachers have some relevant industrial experience. Some updating of this experience is needed. The college is addressing this in part through a women's secondment scheme which has, so far, enabled three women managers from one faculty to attend a work placement programme with women managers in industry or commerce. Some of the non-specialist teachers, who teach English for speakers of other languages, modern languages on vocational courses, or lessons for students with learning difficulties, lack formal training and qualifications.

80 Technical support for teachers in practical areas has been restructured so that traditional technician posts no longer exist. There are now three types of technical support staff. Learning resource assistants

based in the faculty of student and learning services provide good cross-college support for media resources and computing. Technical assistants provide services such as putting out and clearing away equipment, general equipment maintenance and assistance to students in laboratories and workshops. Instructors provide class cover and instruction in laboratories and workshops and act as recorders or assessors for NVQ competences. The faculty of business, management and humanities employs six technical assistants and 13 instructors; the faculty of technology employs 16 technical assistants and 18 instructors. Jointly, they provide adequate technical support in vocational areas and enable teachers to be deployed efficiently. The newly-appointed instructors have taken part in some staff-development activities, but still require further, formal training. The administrative support to divisions is located to provide an efficient service to staff.

81 Since restructuring, the team of six staff in the human resources section has developed relevant personnel policies and procedures. This has resulted in the efficient deployment of staff across the college.

Equipment/learning resources

82 The learning centres at the East Ham, Stratford and Royal Docks campuses combine library, computing, private study and audio-visual amenities. They all have equipment, furniture and fitments of a high standard. Most of the 10 full-time staff within the centres are graduates in librarianship. A combination of networked personal computers, some with multi-media, and computers for art and design work provide 105 workstations. There are 345 study spaces, including 110 silent study areas. There is an adequate bookstock for most curriculum areas. The centres house 36,844 books, 295 periodicals, and 20 compact disk read-only memory (CD-ROM) database titles. Bookshelves in the centres are low in height and sufficiently well spaced to enable access to all books for wheelchair users. Equipment is available to assist students with partial sight and other physical disabilities. Monitoring of the centres' use shows an average 3,000 visits a day.

83 The college has made a significant commitment to the provision of information technology. An investment of £700,000 in 1993-94 and £1.4 million last year, £1 million of which was for equipment for students' use, has resulted in well-equipped and well-furnished facilities, at the East Ham and Stratford campuses in particular. A substantial amount of this equipment is available on open access to all enrolled students in a variety of facilities at all the main college sites. At the East Ham campus there is a large computer facility known as 'IT World'. It is equipped with 268 personal computers, arranged in bays in a large, well-furnished, open-plan area. The facility is bookable for groups of students and is heavily used. Across the college there is a ratio of one computer to six full-time equivalent students. There is an effective college-wide approach to the purchase and development of information technology equipment.

84 There is a data link for computer communications between the Stratford and East Ham campuses. A sophisticated timetabling system has been put onto the college network and is in full use in the faculty of technology and partial use in both the other faculties. It generates room, teachers' and course timetables and will be used to provide information on usage of rooms. This timetabling database can be directly interrogated by and updated from the central database.

85 Considerable investment has been made in purchasing equipment for the newly-accommodated provision in science, engineering and construction. The well-equipped music technology facility is being further expanded and developed. Hairdressing and beauty therapy is housed in a prestigious salon, which creates a professional setting, up to commercial standards; there is a high level of equipment throughout. There is a good language centre at Stratford but facilities for language students at the East Ham campus are of a lower standard. Some old equipment in art and design needs updating. Photographic equipment in this area is inadequate for the programmes being provided.

86 Media resources and reprographic facilities are of a high standard. The target turn-round time on bulk copying and printing is 24 hours. Photocopiers placed around the college are for use by staff and students; they are accessed by means of a magnetic card which students purchase. Despite such good facilities, inspectors saw several examples of poor-quality learning aids, including overhead transparencies.

Accommodation

87 There is a five-year investment plan to upgrade the accommodation and a policy of moving courses to create cognate areas of work on particular sites. This has resulted in many courses, including engineering and construction, moving from the East Ham campus to the Stratford and the Royal Docks. Nearly 90 per cent of the accommodation has been upgraded. As a result of successful bids for external funding, considerable work has been undertaken at Stratford, the Royal Docks and Eastlea to improve access and accommodation. There is a refurbishment plan for East Ham.

88 Generally, the accommodation is of a high standard. There has been considerable development of workshop areas at Stratford to turn them into large, open-plan areas. A new welding workshop and motor vehicle area are due to open in January 1996. The Stratford site now has attractive and well-decorated classrooms and laboratories. Nearly all staffrooms have been brought up to a good standard and there is a well-designed administrative area on the first floor of the East Ham building. By comparison, the few rooms that have not yet been redecorated look drab. Accommodation is well used, but not overcrowded, well maintained and generally clean.

89 There is wheelchair access to most accommodation. Nurseries at East Ham and Stratford are attractive and well used. Refectories on all the

main sites have been refurbished. There is one supervised students' common room at East Ham. The sites at Stratford and East Ham are well served by public transport. The college provides a bus service from East Ham to the Royal Docks.

CONCLUSIONS AND ISSUES

90 The strengths of the college are:

- the wide range of education and training opportunities
- clear management procedures and strategic-planning process
- the strong commitment to promoting equality of opportunity
- the well-designed quality assurance system, including internal inspection, which is beginning to raise academic standards
- effective procedures for the recruitment, guidance and support of students, including an innovative scheme for the mentoring of students by their peers
- thorough planning of courses and much teaching that is well planned and effective
- the good achievements on some vocational courses
- the high standard of accommodation and equipment.

91 To make further progress, the college should:

- continue to improve management information relating to students' records
- consolidate management at the course team level
- ensure that all tutorial sessions are equally effective
- develop systems for identifying the need for and provision of learning support
- tackle the variable quality of teaching on some courses
- address the problems of poor attendance and retention in some areas
- improve examination results at GCSE and GCE A level and on some vocational courses
- update the industrial experience of some teaching staff.

FIGURES

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- 1 Percentage enrolments by age (1994-95)

 - 2 Percentage enrolments by level of study (1994-95)

 - 3 Enrolments by mode of attendance and curriculum area (1994-95)

 - 4 Staff profile – staff expressed as full-time equivalents (1994-95)

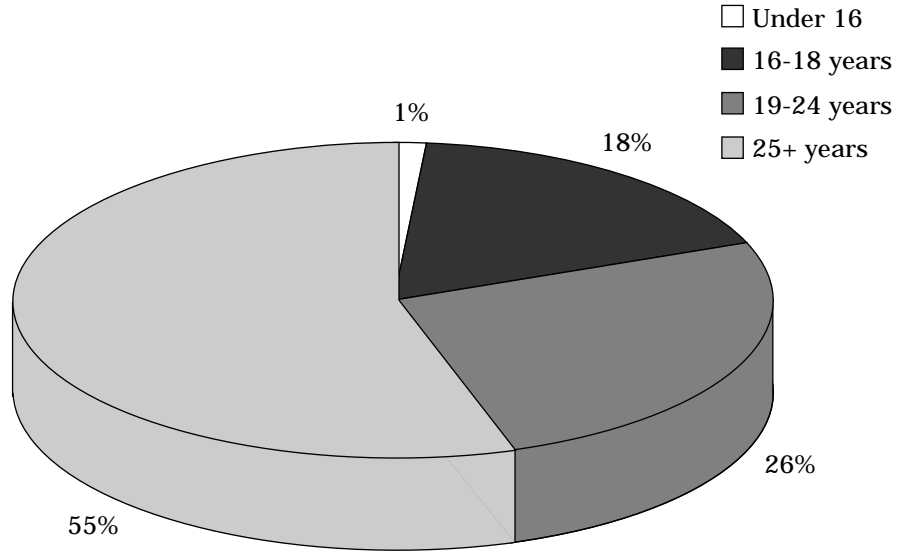
 - 5 Income (for 12 months to July 1995)

 - 6 Expenditure (for 12 months to July 1995)

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

Figure 1

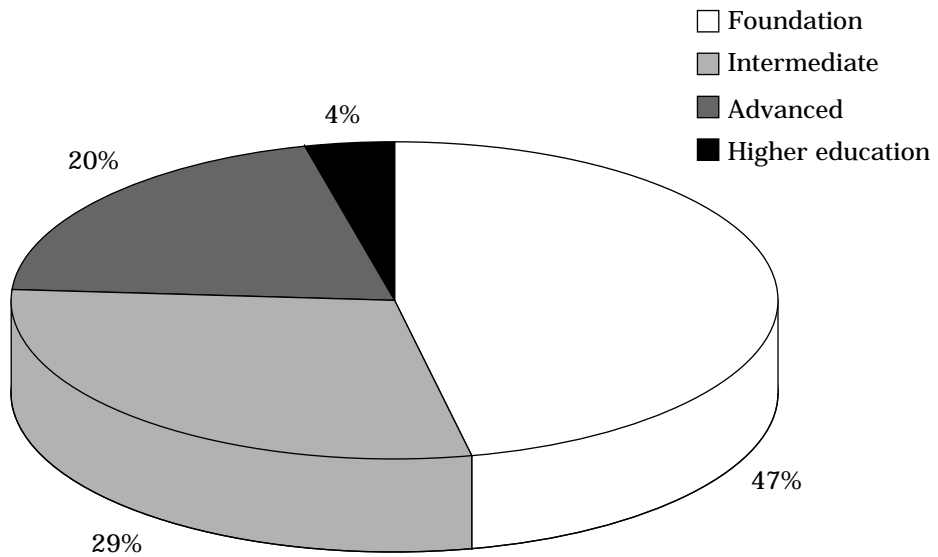
Newham College of Further Education: percentage enrolments by age (1994-95)



Enrolments: 14,897

Figure 2

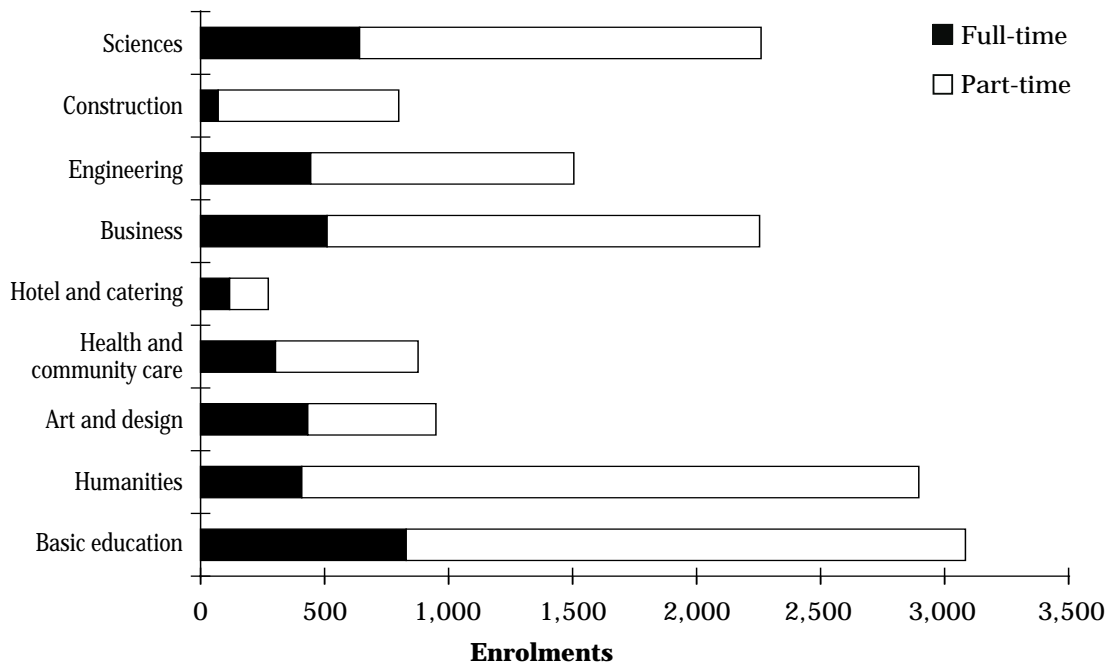
Newham College of Further Education: percentage enrolments by level of study (1994-95)



Enrolments: 14,897

Figure 3

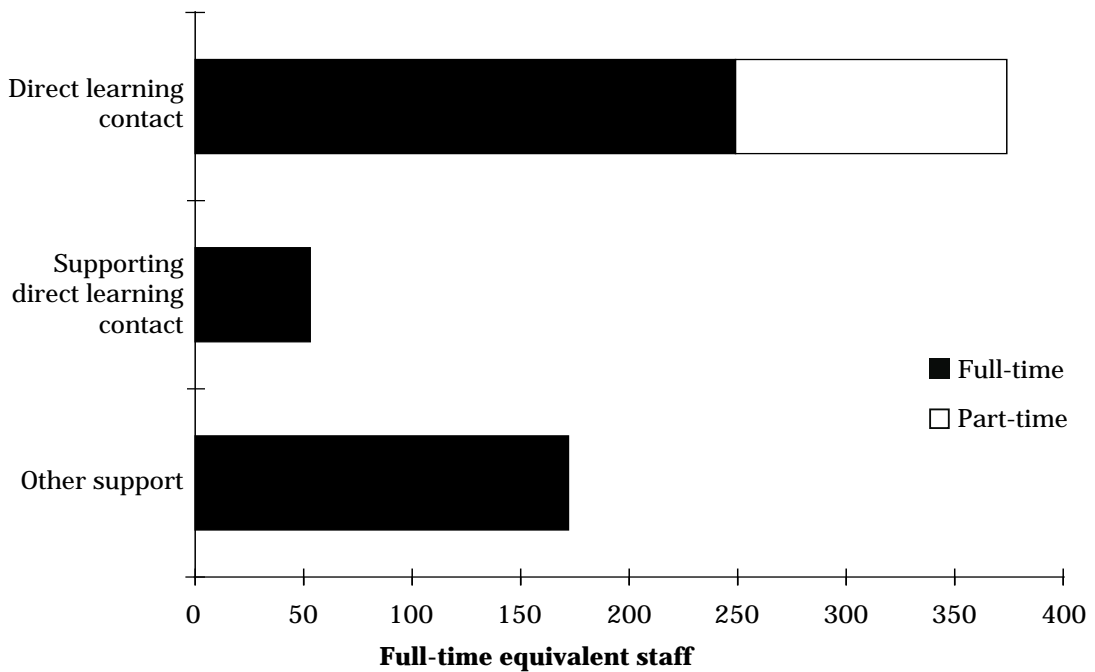
Newham College of Further Education: enrolments by mode of attendance and curriculum area (1994-95)



Enrolments: 14,897

Figure 4

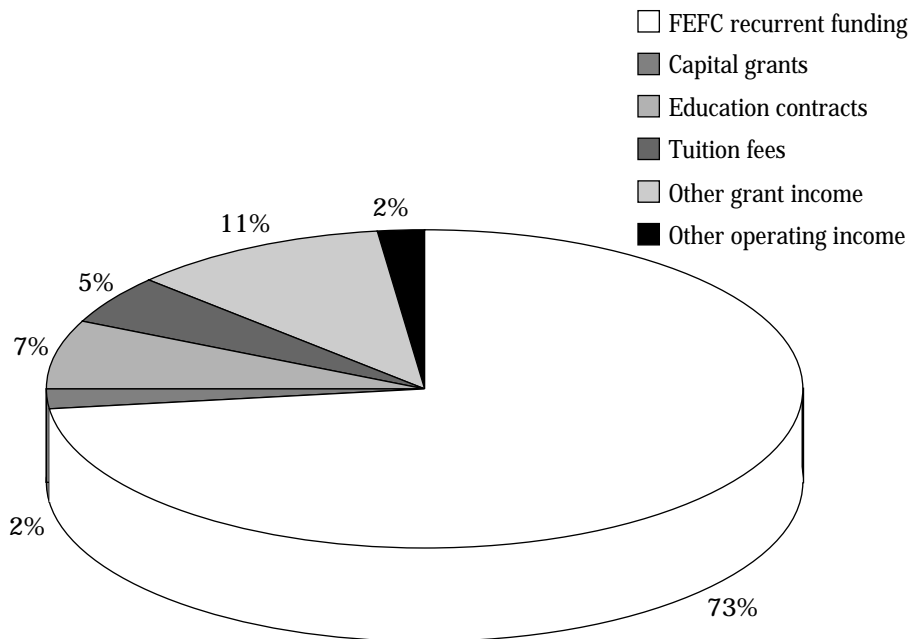
Newham College of Further Education: staff profile - staff expressed as full-time equivalents (1994-95)



Full-time equivalent staff: 599

Figure 5

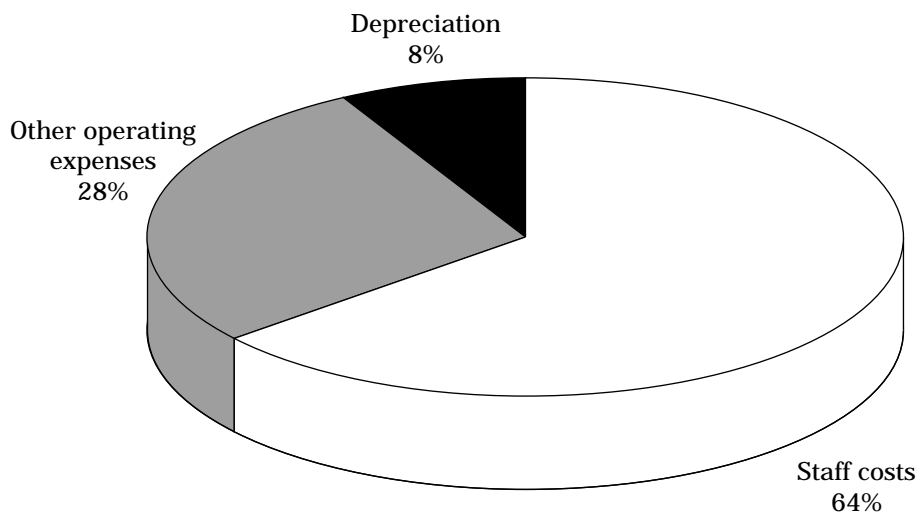
Newham College of Further Education: income (for 12 months to July 1995)



Income: £23,803,000

Figure 6

Newham College of Further Education: expenditure (for 12 months to July 1995)



Expenditure: £21,950,000

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