

**REPORT
FROM THE
INSPECTORATE**

Queen Mary's College

July 1994

**THE
FURTHER
EDUCATION
FUNDING
COUNCIL**

THE FURTHER EDUCATION FUNDING COUNCIL

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

College inspections involve both full-time inspectors and registered part-time inspectors who have specialist knowledge and experience in the areas they inspect. Inspection teams normally include at least one member from outside the world of education and a nominated member of staff from the college being inspected.

GRADE DESCRIPTORS

The procedures for assessing quality are described in the Council Circular 93/28. In the course of inspecting colleges, inspectors assess the strengths and weaknesses of each aspect of provision they inspect. Their assessments are set out in the reports. They also summarise their judgements on the balance between strengths and weaknesses using a five-point scale. 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.*

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FEFC INSPECTION REPORT 41/94

QUEEN MARY'S COLLEGE, HAMPSHIRE

SOUTH EAST REGION

Inspected September 1993 - March 1994

Summary

Queen Mary's College, Hampshire, is a major provider of post-16 full-time education in the Basingstoke area. The college is well governed and well managed and strategic planning is thorough. There are good links with the local community and with schools. Relationships between staff and students are positive. Full-time students benefit from good systems for guidance and support and high-quality teaching. There are high levels of achievement in external examinations. The college has a strong commitment to students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The quality assurance system is at an early stage of development, but there is a clear strategy for further progress. The college should introduce a system for staff appraisal; share with all staff the good methods of teaching used with students who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities; continue to improve and make better use of accommodation; and address inadequacies in computer provision.

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	2
Students' recruitment, guidance and support	2
Quality assurance	3
Resources: staffing	2
equipment/learning resources	3
accommodation	3

Curriculum area	Grade	Curriculum area	Grade
Mathematical & computing studies	3	Creative studies	2
Scientific & technological studies	2	Social studies	2
Business & vocational studies	3	Literary & linguistic studies	2
		Learning support	2

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INTRODUCTION

1 The inspection of Queen Mary's College, Hampshire, took place in three stages. Student enrolment and induction were inspected at the beginning of the autumn term 1993; specialist subject areas were inspected between 7 and 10 February 1994, and aspects of cross-college provision in the period 28 February to 3 March 1994. Most subjects in all curriculum areas were covered, the exceptions being music, Russian, German, physical education, home economics, religious studies, accounting and geology. Ten inspectors took part in the inspection using 68 inspector days. They visited 135 classes, and examined a representative sample of students' written and practical work. Discussions took place with members of the corporation, the senior management team, teaching staff, support staff and students. Inspectors met parents, local employers and representatives of a variety of local community organizations. They also attended a meeting of the corporation and meetings of some major college committees, and examined college policy statements, minutes of committees and associated working papers.

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

THE COLLEGE AND ITS AIMS

3 Queen Mary's College was established as a sixth form college in 1972. It is located on a large and pleasantly landscaped site, on the southern edge of Basingstoke, within easy walking distance of the town centre and railway station. The campus includes the Queen Mary's Centre, a major artistic and cultural focus for regional and local community activities. The centre's facilities are used by over 60,000 members of the public each year. Service-level agreements with funding bodies other than the FEFC support this aspect of the college's work.

4 At the time of the inspection, there were 1,536 full-time equivalent students, of whom 1,417 were following full-time courses and 332 part-time day or evening courses. Percentages of students by age and level of study are shown in figures 1 and 2, respectively. The college had a full-time equivalent staff of 120 lecturers and 36 support staff (figure 3).

5 During the past five years, the number of students in the college's 12 main partner schools has declined by 20 per cent but the college has maintained its growth, increasing overall enrolments by 12 per cent. The college is primarily concerned with full-time students aged 16-19 years taking General Certificate of Education advanced level (GCE A level), advanced supplementary (AS) and General Certificate of Secondary

Education (GCSE) courses. However, growing numbers of mature students are joining day and evening classes and there has been a significant increase in part-time enrolments.

6 The senior management team comprises the principal and the four vice-principals responsible for curriculum, students, finance and administration, and the Queen Mary's Centre. The college's work is organised into six curriculum areas, each headed by a director: business and vocational studies, creative studies, linguistic and literary studies, mathematics and computing, science and technology and social studies. Heads of subject departments report to the directors of these areas. There is also a directorate of curriculum support, which has responsibility for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The recruitment, guidance and support of students are managed by six senior tutors, each leading a team of approximately 14 personal tutors.

7 The college works closely with local 11-16 schools and with the Basingstoke College of Technology. There is a joint working party of senior staff from the college and the college of technology, designed to further co-operation between the two institutions. The Basingstoke Education and Business Partnership, representing schools, colleges, including Queen Mary's College, and local companies, has been established to strengthen educational and business links.

8 Since 1990, the town of Basingstoke has experienced an increase in unemployment across the financial, service and manufacturing sectors. Unemployment reached 7.6 per cent in 1992 and is now approximately 6 per cent. The number of students gaining employment with local companies fell from 250 in 1992 to 134 in 1993. In 1993, 51 per cent of leavers progressed to higher education and 16 per cent to further education.

9 The college's mission is to provide a quality experience for its students and community users, within a welcoming and supportive environment. The college aims to meet the existing and future education and training needs of the people of Basingstoke and Deane.

RESPONSIVENESS AND RANGE OF PROVISION

10 The college offers 42 GCE A level and 38 GCSE subjects for school leavers and adult students. A small but growing number of A level and GCSE subjects is offered on a part-time evening study programme. Other provision includes a 'return to work' programme, assertiveness training, counselling, and presentation skills classes. The NVQ in business administration is available at levels 1, 2 and 3. GNVQs in business, leisure and tourism, art and design, health and social care, and science are planned to begin in September 1994. Full-time equivalent enrolments by mode of attendance and curriculum areas are shown in figure 4.

11 Some 76 complementary study activities and a wide variety of sports are available. The level of student participation is good. Among its

students, the college has the United Kingdom under-19 windsurfing champion and Great Britain's top-ranking lady white-water slalom canoeist.

12 The college campus offers impressive community facilities, including a swimming pool, theatre and large hall. These are much valued and widely used by members of the local community. Students benefit from using these facilities for work experience and for observing professional expertise. The use of the theatre for college productions also provides students with valuable public performance experience. The college has its own children's nursery and is in the process of reviewing the structure of its timetable in order to cater for the needs of mature students.

13 Liaison with local schools and parents is good. A number of planned activities brings the schools, college and employers together to consider joint ventures and to relate business expertise to educational issues. Pupils in their final school year can attend the college to sample lessons before making decisions about future courses and there are plans to hold special GNVQ briefing days. There is a good flow of information to each of the local schools in the form of documentation and presentations by senior tutors, specialist staff and ex-pupils of the school now attending college. Parents' evenings and the annual open meeting with college governors facilitate communication. Students' and parents' satisfaction with the college's services are monitored and the findings used to implement improvements.

14 The consortium of local educational providers, established through the Technical Vocational Education Initiative (TVEI), is being maintained to encourage mutual understanding and to support students' progression from school to college. Its activities include valuable work shadowing experience for staff. Thirty-four staff from local schools are spending between a week and a term at the college during the spring and summer terms of 1994 to shadow college staff and sample teaching activities. There is a reciprocal arrangement for eight college staff to visit local schools, including one of the special schools.

15 Links with employers offer work shadowing, work experience, problem-solving competitions in science, external speakers, and authentic documents and materials for projects and class work. Some curriculum areas are developing schemes to enable GCE A level students to gain vocational accreditation of competencies gained during work experience.

16 The college has a strong commitment to students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. It was a co-founder of the north east Hampshire local forum for those with learning difficulties. Care and support for these students is good and a parents' support group meets on a half-termly basis. Effective liaison with local social services ensures that provision is tailored to students' individual needs. The college should consider developing formal link courses with the local special school and investigate more closely the needs of adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

17 Generally, academic programmes are effectively marketed and subjects with a low take-up are reviewed. Market research to establish employers' requirements and the potential of the adult market is underdeveloped. Marketing and publicity materials are insufficiently focused on specific adult groups. The college prospectus does not effectively reflect the college's good provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There is scope for devising audio-visual and pictorial marketing materials directed at such students.

18 Staff are aware of the National Targets for Education and Training, the related college targets and the overall picture for Hampshire. There is variable understanding below middle management level of the reasons for introducing GNVQs.

19 The college does not have sufficient demographic data to determine the extent to which it meets the needs of groups under-represented at college. As in many other colleges nationally, there are marked gender imbalances in enrolments to computing, science, mathematics, accounting, design and technology, physical education, English literature, foreign languages and sociology. The college recognises this, but has no strategy for addressing the issue. All managers have received training in equal opportunities including interview techniques.

20 Some departments have developed open learning materials. The college's capability to attract students who require more flexible patterns of course delivery would be strengthened if such work were co-ordinated and developed on a college-wide basis.

GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

21 The work of the corporation board is effective. The 20 members comprise 12 independent, two parent and two co-opted governors, together with two staff governors, one student governor and the principal. A second student attends meetings as an observer. Seven of the 12 independent members are middle and senior managers of companies and organisations based in Basingstoke, including the local training and enterprise council. Three are retired senior managers. The two co-opted members, one of whom is the chairman of the board, were previously local authority nominees. The corporation board meets twice each term. One meeting is a full business meeting; the second is to receive the principal's report and presentations by senior managers on current educational, curricular and general college issues.

22 There are eight subcommittees of the corporation which contribute positively to the work of the college: finance, internal affairs, premises, personnel, community management, audit, remuneration and the committee of all chairs of subcommittees. The membership of five of these includes representation from the senior management team and a staff observer. The principal attends the audit and remuneration committees and the committee of all chairs. Each subcommittee meets twice termly.

Independent members of the corporation take an interest in areas of the curriculum in order to gain better understanding of the work of the college. Some governors attend departmental and area meetings as observers and this has proved mutually valuable.

23 The quality of reporting to the corporation board from the college and from its own subcommittees is good. Detailed briefing and working papers are received together with monthly financial data which include cash flows, monthly financial returns, and income and expenditure accounts. Consequently, members of the corporation are in a good position to monitor and review the college's activities.

24 The college fulfils its obligations under Sections 44 and 45 of the Further and Higher Education Act by offering religious studies as part of its GCE A level programme and providing facilities for religious meetings, and worship. Religious worship is organised through the students' union and is available to all students in the college. The college also fulfils its obligations under Section 50 of the Act by sending summaries of students' achievements and destinations to all local schools.

25 The strategic plan and operational statement are produced after a comprehensive consultation process involving staff and students. Teaching staff are involved through their departmental and tutorial committees. The senior management team is now engaged in meetings, devising a new operational statement for submission to the corporation. Students contribute to planning through tutorial activities in which they are encouraged to identify 'strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats'. A summary of their views is forwarded, through the students' union, to senior managers.

26 The college is well managed. Senior management structures are effective. Roles and responsibilities are clearly understood. Middle management, comprising the senior tutors and curriculum area directors, also works well. The college has a comprehensive range of policies and designated staff monitor their implementation.

27 Effective communication exists at all levels in the college. Management groups meet regularly. Teaching staff with cross-college roles and responsibilities for college policies meet twice a term. Cross-college meetings are chaired by the principal and attended by individual members of the senior management team. The principal holds formal staff meetings each term. He also conducts weekly staff briefings and produces information papers as required. Most college meetings are clearly minuted.

28 The computerised management information system is networked to the senior tutors, the vice-principals (curriculum and students), the administrative centre, finance centre, and the examination centre. It is not yet available to curriculum directors. The system is used for financial, personnel and student data. The system was originally modelled for schools and is in need of development. Adaptions to provide improved

information on students are intended to come into operation before the start of the 1994-95 academic year.

29 The college's unit of funding for 1992-93 was £2,792 per weighted full-time equivalent student. The median for sixth form colleges was £2,647. Summaries of the college's recurrent income and estimated expenditure are shown in figures 5 and 6.

30 The budget is managed by the vice-principal (finance and administration). Detailed monthly reports are produced for each cost centre, some of which are single- subject, single-person departments. A small resources budget is delegated to curriculum directors who further devolve this to heads of department after retaining a contingency sum. The system of financial management and the formula used for delegation is understood by teachers, many of whom are budget holders. The recent appointment of a business manager, who is a chartered accountant, will assist the vice-principal in determining and guiding the financial development of the college. Staff and other resources are effectively deployed.

STUDENTS' RECRUITMENT, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

31 Pre-entry information and guidance for prospective full-time students is generally good. There is an established and well-planned procedure for advising applicants, and a constructive partnership between schools and the relevant college staff. The information on courses is normally of good quality but, in a few cases, there is insufficient description of the nature of the work and the likely experience for intending students. The programme of open days and evenings, which allows for consultations with prospective students and parents, is of great value. Pre-entry information for adult applicants is in the very early stages of development.

32 Students' programmes of study are initially agreed through school-based consultations involving the school, the prospective student and the college. These programmes are reviewed and confirmed with personal tutors during college enrolment. In some subject areas, more effective liaison with schools and greater involvement of the senior tutors in the briefing of schools would ensure that pre-course information is of maximum value.

33 There is a constructive and thorough induction procedure for all full-time students. Students benefit from a well-designed and helpful handbook which provides an informative source of reference on college contacts, college procedures, rules and obligations. At the time of enrolment, students and their parents sign the 'college agreement' which advises students of their rights and responsibilities. The tutorial system provides an effective and well-monitored procedure for transfer between courses and subjects.

34 Throughout their studies, most full-time students are effectively informed and supported by a college-wide tutorial system. However, a number of students are not fully aware of course expectations or the criteria for judging success, and weaknesses in study skills are not always detected through the personal tutor and subject tutor network. Some lecturers would benefit from staff development to help them become more effective personal tutors.

35 There is a professional counselling and guidance service for all students which includes referral to external organisations where necessary. Work with mature students is significantly increasing the demands on the welfare and learner support services. The college and the careers service are contracted to provide a careers education and guidance service. Programmes are planned on an annual basis and effectively devolved. Appropriately, there is a heavy focus on advice and guidance for students progressing to higher education. Personal tutors are briefed by the careers advisers to enable them to advise their tutor groups.

36 The college has developed a student profiling system based on national records of achievement. Students and personal tutors engage in consultations at specified intervals and the outcomes form a record of the students' progress and achievements. This has enhanced relations between staff and students, and helped to develop in students a greater degree of self-confidence and a more realistic attitude to self-assessment. Profiles are particularly effective in enabling the personal tutors to prepare confidential reports for students applying for higher education. The recording of achievement is less satisfactory on some foundation level programmes.

37 Records of attendance are well maintained; persistent absence is monitored through the tutorial structure and personal tutors follow up with action as necessary. The present manual system is soon to be replaced by an electronic system which will enable college management to monitor attendance records more closely.

38 Students and parents are content with the guidance and support provided, and see the college as a good place to study. Most feel that the right balance is achieved between students becoming personally responsible for their education and the college providing a suitable level of support. Many students come to the college on the recommendation of family and friends. The college conducts extensive monitoring and evaluation of procedures and activities which affect students' experience.

TEACHING AND THE PROMOTION OF LEARNING

39 Of the 135 teaching sessions inspected, 64 per cent had strengths which clearly outweighed the weaknesses. Ninety-five per cent of the sessions inspected were at grade 3 or above. The distribution of inspection grades is shown in the following table.

Teaching sessions: inspection grades by programme of study

Programmes	Grade	1	2	3	4	5	Totals
GCE A/AS level		8	54	20	4	0	86
GCSE		0	9	9	2	0	20
Other		3	12	13	1	0	29
Total		11	75	42	7	0	135

40 Curriculum areas have devised coherent programmes for students. Lecturers are normally aware of their students' learning needs and have sought to improve the chances of student success by constantly reviewing the appropriateness of syllabuses. In mathematics, for example, the examination board for GCE A level has recently been changed and the college has adopted the School Mathematics Project 16-19.

41 Schemes of work were sound, although the level of detail varied considerably. Good planning and preparation characterised most teaching. The aims of lessons were made clear to the students and this helped to make learning more effective. In English, the planning and preparation for students' project work was carried out particularly well. In art and design, some project work required a better written brief, clearly stating the task and the expected outcomes.

42 Relationships between staff and students were positive. In the better classes, students responded to tasks enthusiastically and there was a sense of activity and purpose. The pace of work was generally suitable for the ability of students and the demands of the course. In some of the foreign language and business studies classes, students lacked confidence and were too subdued to take full advantage of the opportunities for learning.

43 Teachers employed a variety of methods for teaching and the promotion of learning. In the majority of sessions, the methods of working were appropriately matched to learning objectives. Students worked well, both individually and in groups. Previous learning was properly consolidated before moving on to new topics and teachers helped students develop effective links and cross references to other work. In science, the teaching was considerably strengthened by the use of topical examples. In mathematics, lecturers employed an insufficient range of techniques to develop and maintain students' interest.

44 In the minority of teaching sessions, where weaknesses predominated, the most common faults were teachers' failure to manage the session so as to involve all students, the poor management of lesson time, the lack of sufficiently stimulating material and the poor use of blackboards and overhead projectors.

45 There was particularly good teaching in practical subjects, most notably in the sciences and in art and design. In science and technology,

the project approach was used for as many parts of the syllabus as possible. This produced an emphasis on practical investigations by individual students and the quality of the work was excellent. On a GCE A level art course, a project in painting provided a good example of challenging learning and well-prepared project work. Students constructed a set using coloured shapes in card, illuminated with coloured spotlights. They were then required to paint it from a selected viewpoint, attempting to match the colour they saw by using a restricted palette of primary colours and white. The students benefited from completing a difficult task, and were supported throughout by constructive advice from the lecturer.

46 Teaching materials were normally relevant, interesting and stimulating. There was good use of printed handouts. The inconsistent standards evident in some areas of work emphasise the need for a greater sharing of good teaching methodology. Good practice in the teaching of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities should be shared with staff in other work areas.

47 Assignments were generally marked effectively. Written comments from teachers helped students to address their weaknesses. There were many valuable individual discussions between staff and students about the strengths and weaknesses of assignments. The geography department makes good use of well-developed marking criteria. In history, the students first review their own performance in order to prepare for discussion of their work with lecturers. In some areas, the marking of spelling and grammar was insufficiently rigorous.

48 The teaching of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities was energetic, enthusiastic and supportive. Staff understood the difficulties of students and catered for these on an individual basis. However, learning materials were insufficiently differentiated for various levels of ability and this prevented some students' difficulties being addressed at a fundamental level. The delivery of integrated complementary studies was inspired and exciting. In a complementary studies music session, two students with significant learning difficulties were fully integrated with students from GCE A level and GCSE groups.

STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENTS

49 The great majority of students enjoy their courses, are highly motivated and receive encouragement in their progress towards defined goals. The students are consulted about the strengths and weaknesses of the college. They rate highly the quality of staff/student relations as a factor leading to a real sense of community. Students are clearly happy at the college.

50 All curriculum areas provide guidance and practice in specific study skills in addition to the development of more general study skills through the tutorial system. There is ample evidence of students' ability to work both independently and in groups. Much of the written and oral work seen

during the inspection was of a high quality. Students were assured and articulate in speaking about their work and the general life of the college.

51 The college's policy to develop students' information technology skills is not adequately implemented. A more systematic approach to the use of resources and an increase in the number of computers, which is currently planned, should enable more students to acquire basic competence. Similarly, greater flexibility in the use of numeracy and literacy workshops, in collaboration with the learning support service, would benefit a number of students who have demonstrated the need for such support.

52 In 1992 and 1993, GCE A level and GCSE pass rates have been consistently above the national averages. In 1992, 565 GCE A level candidates gained 1,229 passes, at grades A-E, with an overall pass rate of 84.5 per cent. Similar numbers of candidates and passes produced a slight improvement in 1993. Both years compare favourably with the pass rates for all schools and colleges, sixth form colleges and other further education sector colleges which, in 1993, were 77 per cent, 80 per cent and 66 per cent, respectively. Tables published recently by the Department for Education show that the college's students, age 16-18, entering for fewer than two GCE A levels (or AS equivalents) obtained an average point score of 3.5, as compared with the national average for schools and colleges of 2.7 (where A=10, E=2). Where students entered for two or more GCE A levels (or AS equivalents) the average point score was 13.8, compared with a national average of 14.7. This performance places the college in the top 20 per cent of institutions within the further education sector. While comparison of GCSE results with national averages is less meaningful, when many candidates are sitting examinations for a second time, college students achieved good pass rates, grades A-C: 58.9 per cent in 1992; 56.3 per cent in 1993. In 1993, the average pass rate nationally was 50 per cent.

53 In the business and vocational studies area, results at GCE A level were well above national subject averages, and a good number of higher grades were achieved. Performance at GCSE level was variable, but generally above the national average except in economics.

54 GCE A level results in art fell below the national average in 1993. Analysis of students' performance using the Advanced Level Information Service (ALIS) also indicate that achievements were lower than might have been predicted from students' GCSE qualifications. Results in music presented a worse picture. Although only 72 per cent completed the course, the first group of students to sit GCE A level physical education achieved a high pass rate. GCSE results in these curriculum areas were, on the whole, slightly better than the national average.

55 In the linguistic and literary studies area, embracing English and modern languages, GCE A level results have been, almost without exception, good. For English language and English literature, pass rates in 1992 and 1993 were significantly above the national average, and there

was an impressive number of high grades. In modern languages, results were generally above the national average and included a good number of high grades. In French, there was a retention rate of about 80 per cent in both years, and in German a similar rate in 1992, improving in 1993. In 1993, the ALIS analysis was positive for both French and Spanish, but negative for German. GCSE results have generally been satisfactory. There have also been good results in Russian at both levels.

56 GCE A level mathematics pass rates have been below national averages for the last two years, although a substantial number of students achieved high grades. The ALIS analysis produced a negative result in 1993. In some cases, results were less satisfactory when assessed against retention rates. GCE A level pass rates in computing have been close to the national average. GCSE pass rates in mathematics have declined, a trend which has prompted consideration of alternative certification which may be more suitable for the capabilities of students.

57 In the scientific and technological studies area, GCE A level results have been variable, but generally satisfactory. While pass rates in physics have been above the national average in both years, only 75 per cent of students completed the course. Results in social biology have been generally better than those for the Nuffield syllabus, but there was a significant improvement in the Nuffield results in 1993. In 1993, the ALIS analysis produced negative results for student achievements in chemistry and design technology. GCSE results in scientific and technological subjects were slightly above national averages.

58 GCE A level history results were outstanding and included a large number of high grades both in 1992 and 1993. The ALIS analysis also produced a positive outcome. However, the retention rate in one of the history courses fell to 70 per cent. Results in sociology and religious studies were close to the national average. In media studies, high pass rates were gained, but retention rates declined to about 75 per cent. Results in geography in both years were below the national average, and there were fewer high grades. There was some improvement in 1993 compared with 1992. GCSE results in the social studies area have been variable but generally satisfactory.

59 For those students whose main programme of study is delivered through the learning support service, the lack of detailed examination statistics prevents a firm assessment of outcomes. However, it is clear that real progress in core skills and the development of self-confidence is being achieved by most of these students.

60 The overall performance in examinations is good, and success is reflected in the destinations of students. In 1993, 51 per cent of leavers progressed to higher education, 16 per cent to further education, and 20 per cent to full-time employment.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

61 Copies of the Charter for Further Education have been distributed to all members of college staff and formally discussed in team meetings. Students are generally unaware of its existence and content. The college agreement provides a basis for the college charter to be produced by the end of this academic year. Students are conscious of their own responsibilities but not of the college's obligations to them.

62 A quality group, chaired by the vice-principal (students) is responsible for steering the development of a quality control system. This group is a servicing group for the senior management team and does not itself take any action as a result of quality monitoring. Using the strategic quality management approach it has established a clear statement of priorities and a framework based on the four phases of a student's interaction with the college. This has led to the identification of quality standards and indicators, against which the college measures performance. Developments are in the early stages, but a clear plan and strategy for further progress have been proposed by the group, and there are realistic timescales and an understanding of the need to involve staff. The group has recently extended its membership to include support staff and a broader range of teaching staff.

63 A first round of team reviews covered all GCE A level courses and senior tutor teams. It was completed in November 1993. Complementary studies will be included in the next round and all other assessed courses and cross-college and support teams in the following year. As yet, there are relatively few outcomes from this process and the quality of the reviews varies considerably. Many of the resulting reports are descriptive, plans for action tend to express general aspirations rather than specific targets, and often there is no agreed timescale. Teams do not always address what they themselves can do to bring about improvements. The systematic use of performance indicators is being developed but there is limited evidence of identification and analysis of trends.

64 Effective review has led to changes, for example, in the induction programme and in student guidance and support. One staff team has developed a system of regular feedback from students which has led to changes in course delivery. The quality group has produced summaries of team reviews and modified standards in the light of these.

65 Two pilot projects for quality improvement have been introduced which have assisted the review of current practice. One was initiated by a member of the support staff, working closely with teachers in the media studies department: students were required to log their activities and this brought about their awareness and use of video editing facilities. The other project was successful in focusing the history department's attention on teaching issues during students' induction. The college is a member of the Hampshire steering group for mutual external quality review. This is adding a further perspective to the college's evolving system.

66 Factors which have hindered progress in developing quality assurance include the doubts expressed by a significant minority of staff about the value of students' contributions to the assessment of quality and the variation in the extent to which directors of curriculum areas have assimilated their responsibilities for the management of quality audit. No quality control system exists for support staff and the college recognises that it should address this.

67 A staff-development policy has recently been published which outlines general principles, the entitlements and responsibilities of all staff, management responsibilities and systems and procedures. As an integral part of their working year, all full-time teachers are expected to complete a minimum of 15 hours of staff development. The policy is working reasonably well, and staff are meeting the requirement in a variety of ways. The staff-development plan is not yet formally related to strategic priorities, but many of the events during this first year reflect central concerns. Evaluations of external and internal events which staff have attended are completed regularly. An annual review of the staff-development process, to evaluate its effectiveness, is the responsibility of the staff-development manager.

68 A well-planned induction programme for staff is much valued. Responses from newly-appointed staff indicate that in most cases their expressed needs are being met. The college's commitment to those currently on licensed teacher training is producing a strain on the staff-development budget.

69 The college does not have a system of staff appraisal. Currently, no one person has a total picture of the skills and development needs of an individual member of staff. It is part of the brief of the staff-development and appraisal committee (teaching staff) to research differing approaches and practices. The separate management of the academic and pastoral functions within the college results in staff having two line managers. It should be decided, therefore, at an early stage, who the appraiser will be and who will contribute to the appraisal. There is no plan to meet the staff development needs of support staff. A staff-development and appraisal committee (support staff), chaired by the vice-principal (finance and administration), has recently been established.

RESOURCES

Staffing

70 The college has enthusiastic, dedicated and well-qualified staff. Eighty-two per cent of the teaching staff are graduates in disciplines appropriate to the subjects they teach; 24 per cent have higher degrees and 94 per cent have a teaching qualification. Many teachers are examiners, moderators and members of professional associations and have thus kept abreast of developments in their subjects.

71 Two teachers have assessor or verifier qualifications from the appropriate accrediting bodies. Only two staff have industrial or commercial experience acquired within the last five years. This may prove an impediment to the effective development of GNVQ provision, particularly in business studies and art. For example, no member of staff has recent commercial experience in three-dimensional design.

72 Technician staff are well qualified. Technician support is adequate except in art, where the low level of support contributes to the poor housekeeping.

73 Through the work of senior staff, the staff consultative committee, and the corporation's human resource committee, all essential personnel policies and procedures are in place or in the final stages of approval.

74 The college is developing its understanding and use of a computerised personnel module to form a fully effective staff database. Methods of monitoring staff utilisation are less sophisticated. Standard performance indicators are not routinely calculated.

Equipment

75 There is adequate provision of general teaching and learning aids and a good range of appropriate equipment for students with learning difficulties. Departments are generally well equipped, and the purchase of more specialist items, particularly in science, has been made possible through the support of the Queen Mary's Foundation. There are problems in some specialist areas. The two language laboratories have to share a single control console, and in business studies, typing skills are still taught on electronic typewriters rather than computers. Heavily-used items of equipment, such as calorimeters in science, are becoming less reliable and some of the equipment in the technology workshop is not in working order. The college should develop a replacement policy for items which are ageing or becoming outmoded.

76 The major weakness is in information technology. The college has 136 computers which include a mixed collection of personal computers, of varied memory capacity, numerous BBC computers and a single Atari. It has two Novelle networks and an Econet network. The current ratio of the more advanced machines to full-time equivalent students is 1:32 which will improve to only 1:20 when the new library and associated information technology centre is available. The college should review its information technology policies.

77 The curriculum support centre includes a very good central service for audio-visual aids, reprographics, information technology support and the library. The budget of £40,000 for 16 months is modest, particularly in the absence of any central replacement budget. A separate capital investment is being made during the current year to equip the re-located information technology centre. The library is well managed. Book losses are low; analysis of book usage is developing through the

newly-commissioned electronic issue system, and the number of students using the library is effectively monitored. A recent survey has indicated that 49 per cent of students had not been introduced to the library by lecturers following their induction to the college.

78 The library has 13,000 texts. There are three additional book stocks in science, art, and history supported by departmental budgets. The quality and currency of the books is good except in mathematics and three-dimensional design. Materials for theatre studies should be displayed more prominently. The different cataloguing system for language texts is confusing and students in languages would benefit from the acquisition of magazines that are more suitable for their age group. The range of books for English is particularly good and is used effectively.

79 There are 94 study spaces in the library for 1,536 full-time equivalent students. This includes eight computer work stations which are used to access information on CD- ROM. In the new library, study spaces will decline to 88 but there will be additional space available in the new information technology centre. At the moment, study space is adequate for student needs. It will come under increasing pressure as a result of the college's plans for an increase in student numbers, the development of resource-based learning and the growing proportion of adult students.

Accommodation

80 The college has a diverse range of buildings. Much of the accommodation is of good quality but there are a large number of poor-quality portable buildings. The main buildings offer good accommodation for teaching, administration and reception. The main entrance to the college with the associated light and airy thoroughfare, often used for display and exhibition purposes, presents a positive image. The new modular building represents high-quality teaching space.

81 Some of the huts are very old and are unsuitable for teaching. The majority of the rooms in the social studies building, originally built as temporary offices, are unsatisfactory because of their size, shape, sound insulation, heating and ventilation. The permanent building has large areas of flat felt-covered roofing, or corrugated asbestos cement roofing. There are significant imperfections in heating and ventilation systems and the fabric and construction of the swimming pool.

82 The college is tackling many of these deficiencies. There is an accommodation strategy which the governors fully support. Improvements have already been achieved by the addition of the modular building and through the major capital project for a new learning support centre, due to be completed by autumn 1994. Considerable progress has been made with the provision of ramps and wide doorways which, with the addition of the lift in the new centre, will ensure increasingly good access for students with restricted mobility. The limited social space for students encourages them to congregate in corridors and this occasionally creates obstacles to passage.

83 Some accommodation could be significantly improved with additional care, attention and planning. The art, pottery and drama areas are potentially a superb resource but the general level of housekeeping is very poor and the areas are badly organised. Many parts of the accommodation are poorly decorated and cleaned, including some rooms and corridors in the main building and the Queen Mary's Hall complex. The central studio needs redecoration and refurbishment and the college has identified this as a priority. The science area has good laboratories but because of their design they cannot be used for a wide range of different learning activities. The physics and chemistry preparation room is poorly organised and too small to cater for existing needs. The technology workshop is spacious and well equipped, but it is not fully used for its intended purpose because of low student numbers, and it is not used at all for essential elements of drama and art. The home economics room is unsuitably placed in this area and is also under used. The whole of the art, pottery, drama and technology suite would benefit from a fundamental review of use and working practices.

84 The college retains the consultancy services of Hampshire County Council to assist with a room utilisation survey and the development of a plan for the management of accommodation.

CONCLUSIONS AND ISSUES

85 The college has made significant progress towards achieving its mission to provide students and community users with a quality experience within a welcoming and supportive environment.

The particular strengths of the college are:

- the well-developed links with the community
- effective governance and management
- thorough strategic planning
- strong support and guidance for students
- good staff and student relationships
- the high quality of teaching in most curriculum areas
- good levels of achievement in external examinations
- the strong commitment to students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

86 If it is to maintain and improve standards, the college should address the following issues:

- the introduction of a staff appraisal system
- the continued development of quality assurance procedures
- inadequate computer provision
- the sharing of good methods of teaching delivery developed with students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

FIGURES

-
- 1 Percentage enrolments by age (November 1993)

 - 2 Percentage enrolments by level of study (November 1993)

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

 - 4 Enrolments expressed as full-time equivalents by mode of attendance and curriculum area (1993-94)

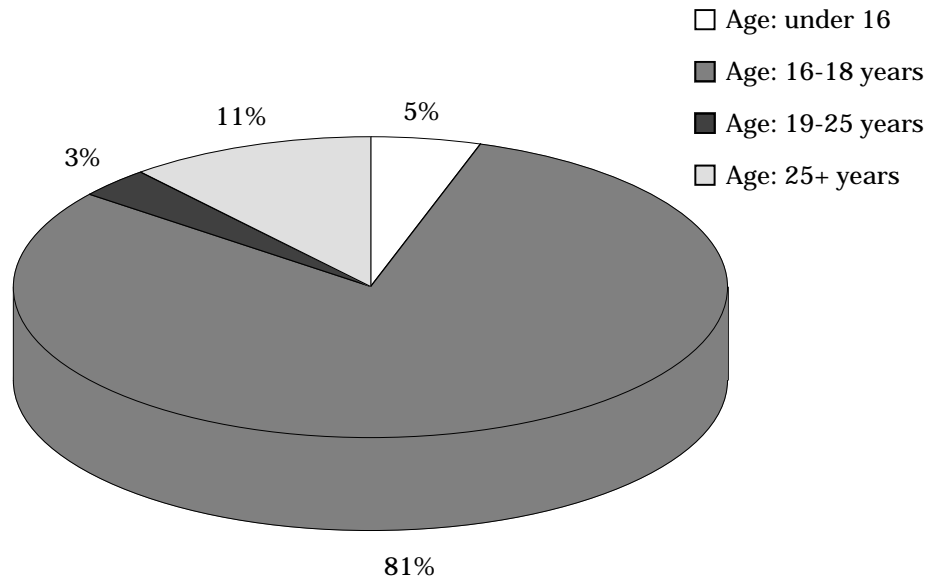
 - 5 Recurrent income (1993-94)

 - 6 Estimated expenditure (1993-94)

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

Figure 1

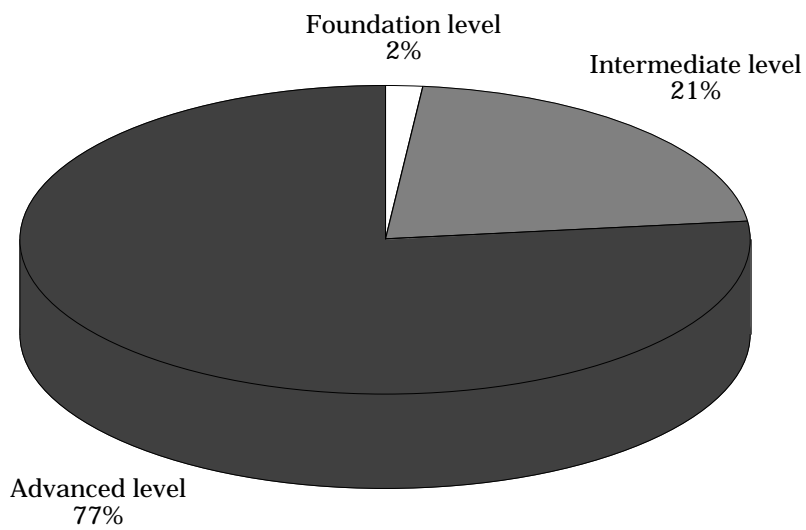
Queen Mary's College: percentage enrolments by age (November 1993)



Enrolments: 1,749

Figure 2

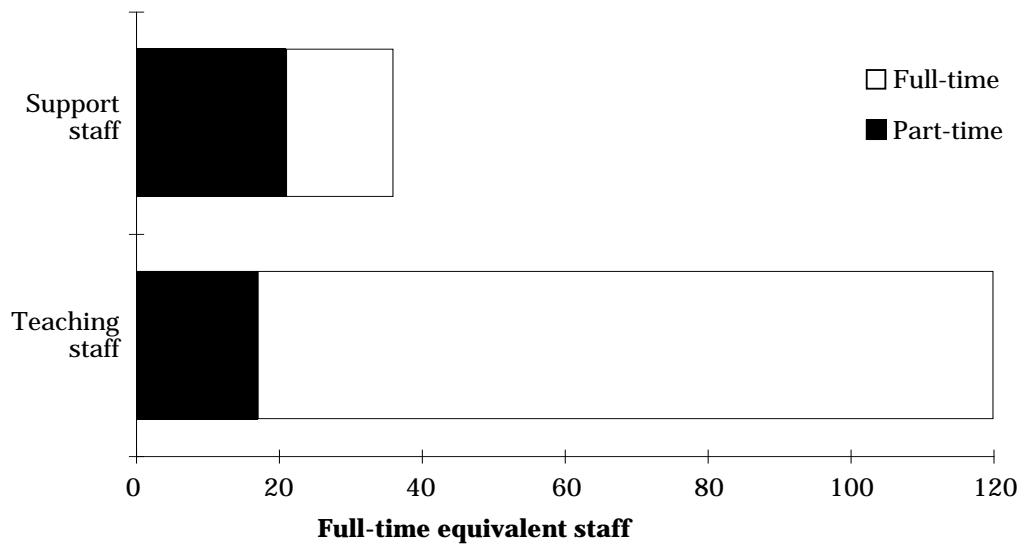
Queen Mary's College: percentage enrolments by level of study (November 1993)



Enrolments: 1,749

Figure 3

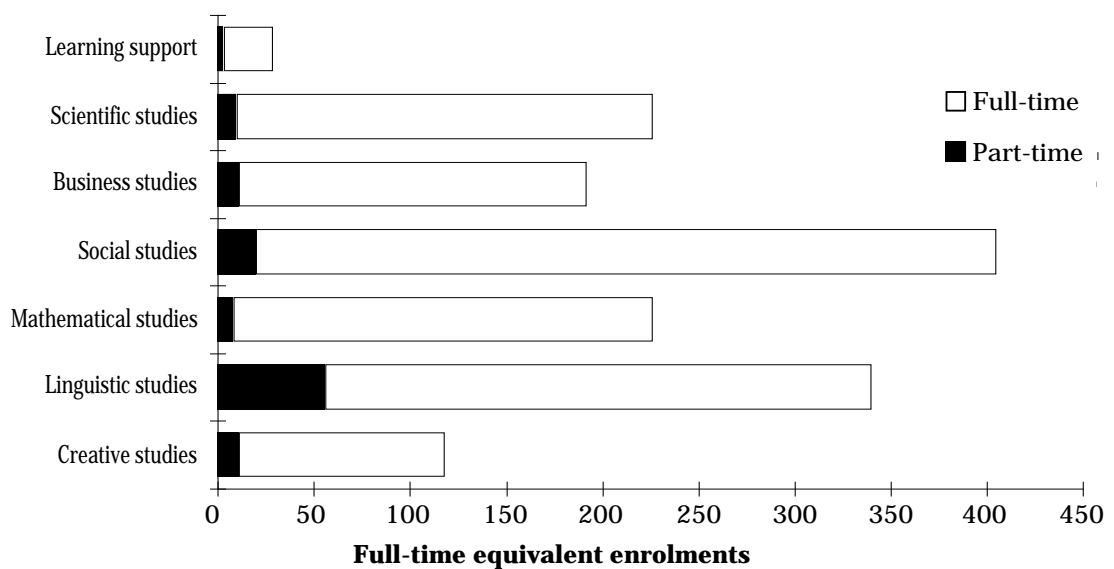
Queen Mary's College: staff profile-staff expressed as full-time equivalents (1993-94)



Full-time equivalent staff: 156

Figure 4

Queen Mary's College: percentage enrolments expressed as full-time equivalents by mode of attendance and curriculum area (1993-94)



Full-time equivalent enrolments: 1,536

Figure 5

Queen Mary's College: recurrent income (1993-94)

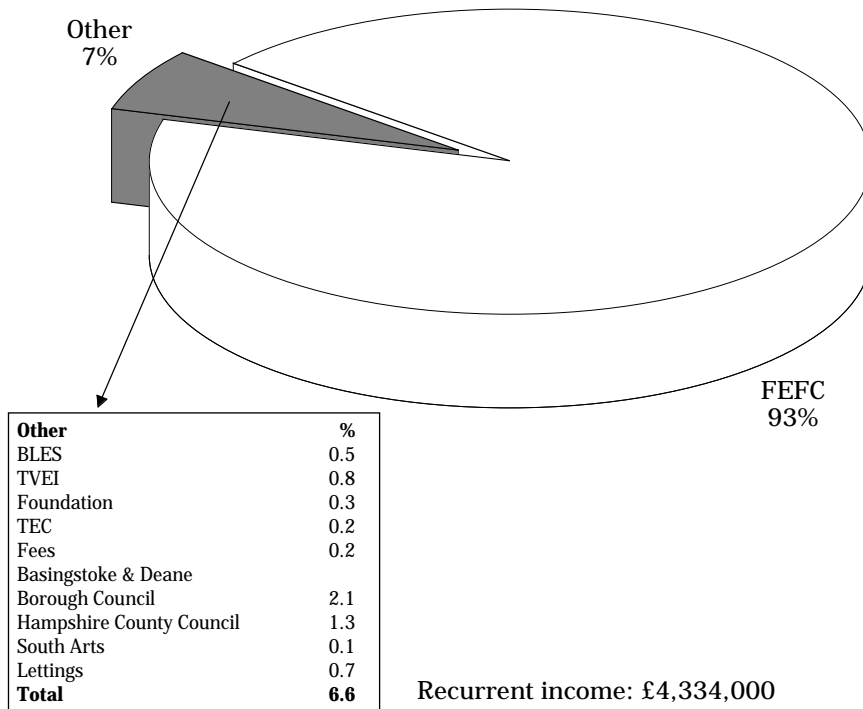
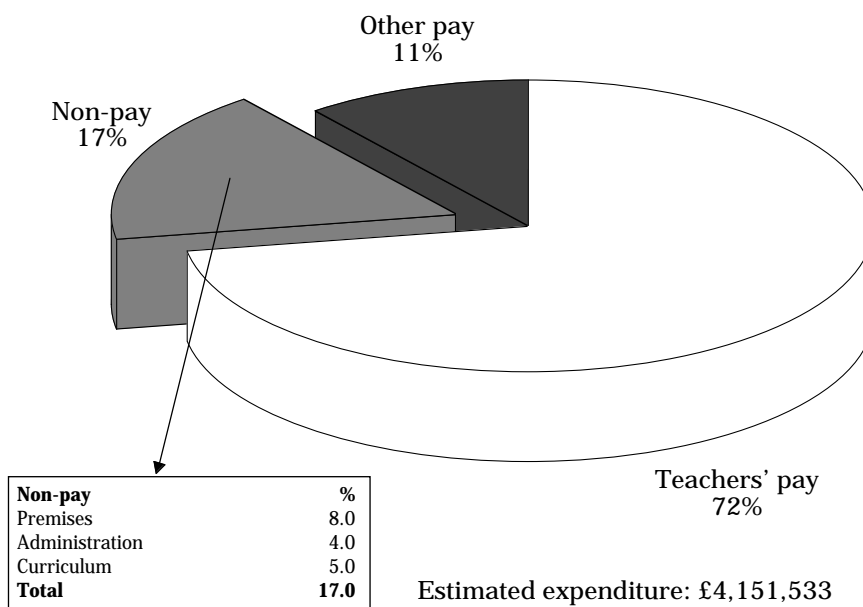


Figure 6

Queen Mary's College: estimated expenditure (1993-94)



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