

**REPORT
FROM THE
INSPECTORATE**

Totton College

May 1996

**THE
FURTHER
EDUCATION
FUNDING
COUNCIL**

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FUNDING COUNCIL**

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

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

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CONTENTS

	Paragraph
Summary	
Introduction	1
The college and its aims	2
Responsiveness and range of provision	7
Governance and management	16
Students' recruitment, guidance and support	24
Teaching and the promotion of learning	32
Students' achievements	40
Quality assurance	52
Resources	60
Conclusions and issues	73
Figures	

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 70/96

TOTTON COLLEGE
SOUTH EAST REGION

Inspected September 1995-February 1996

Summary

Far-sighted management has enabled Totton College to become increasingly responsive to the needs of its local community. Staff support the college's aim of increasing significantly its range of adult and vocational work. The college has established several partnerships with other agencies to benefit from joint funding for increased community and sporting facilities. There has been considerable refurbishment and modernisation of some of the accommodation recently though much remains to be done. Enrolment and induction procedures are effective, and there is supportive pastoral care for students. Internal communication is good. Examination results and retention rates vary widely; some are good, some are poor. There is good support for adult basic education students and for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Data from the college's various management information systems conflict and are unreliable. The quality assurance system should be strengthened. The college's approach to assessing examination pass rates and student retention rates lacks rigour, and responsibility for ensuring improvement in performance is insufficiently clear. The study skills centre is underdeveloped. The library is small, its bookstock is limited, and it has few study spaces for students.

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

Aspects of cross-college provision	Grade
Responsiveness and range of provision	2
Governance and management	3
Students' recruitment, guidance and support	2
Quality assurance	4
Resources: staffing	2
equipment/learning resources	3
accommodation	3

Curriculum area	Grade	Curriculum area	Grade
Science	3	Art and design	3
Mathematics	2	Social studies	3
Business and administration	3	English and languages	3
Health and care	2	Basic education	2

INTRODUCTION

1 Totton College in Hampshire was inspected during the period September 1995 to February 1996. The college's enrolment and induction procedures were inspected early in September 1995. Specialist subject areas were inspected in January 1996, when nine inspectors took part for a total of 31 inspector days. They visited 103 classes, attended by 1,156 students and examined students' work. Inspection of aspects of cross-college provision took place in February 1996, when seven inspectors took part for a total of 24 inspector days. Meetings were held with members of the governing body, the executive and directorate teams, heads of department, staff with cross-college responsibilities, teaching, support and administrative staff, and students. Inspectors talked with a group of employers, a representative from the Hampshire Training and Enterprise Council (TEC), community representatives, and parents of students attending the college. They examined policy statements, documents describing internal systems and controls, and minutes of meetings.

THE COLLEGE AND ITS AIMS

2 Totton College was established as a sixth form college in 1969, as a result of the reorganisation of post-16 education across Hampshire. It was previously a grammar school. The college is situated five miles from the centre of the city of Southampton, in a pleasant residential area on the edge of the New Forest. It attracts students from Totton and from the Waterside area, the New Forest, Romsey and Southampton. The college site includes the local community swimming pool and recreation centre. Totton itself is the largest urban area in the New Forest, with a population of 35,000. It is close to motorway and rail networks, and is near the commercial and industrial centres of the Solent and Fawley. The unemployment rate locally is approximately 6 per cent, 1 per cent below the regional average. The college is one of Totton's major employers.

3 At the time of the inspection, the college had 898 full-time students, 1,137 part-time students on vocational programmes, and 739 mature students on general interest and leisure programmes. Enrolment of part-time students continues throughout the year. Student numbers by age and by level of study are shown in figures 1 and 2. FEFC-funded student numbers by mode of attendance and curriculum area are shown in figure 3. The college employs a total of 131 full-time equivalent staff. A staff profile, with staff expressed as full-time equivalents, is shown in figure 4.

4 The work of the college is organised in three faculties: arts; social sciences; and science. There is also an enterprise section responsible for customised and short training courses, including those sponsored by the TEC and by the European Social Fund. Tutorial support for students is provided through four teams of staff led by pastoral advisers.

5 The college operates in a highly competitive environment for recruiting school leavers. There are five other colleges in the immediate

area. A local high school will open its own sixth form in September 1996. However, in the last two years the college has increased its enrolments; it has been restructured and its range of courses has been widened significantly. It has attracted additional students from schools in Romsey and west Southampton as well as locally. The number of full-time and part-time mature students is increasing. Some join mainstream courses which are also attended by students aged 16 to 18, but the majority enrol on separate adult courses which run in the daytime, in the evenings and at weekends. The college uses its own adult education building at Dibden Purlieu and rented facilities elsewhere. It also franchises courses in other areas of south-west Hampshire.

6 The college states that its mission is to be 'the premier centre for post-16 education and training in south west Hampshire serving students, the community and business'. To this end, the college strives to value all students equally, to offer them a purposeful and supportive environment, and to offer effective training and education programmes for the local community.

RESPONSIVENESS AND RANGE OF PROVISION

7 The college offers 33 General Certificate of Education advanced level (GCE A level) and 25 General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) subjects, many for full-time or part-time study. Since 1993, it has also gradually introduced full-time courses for General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQs) in six areas at foundation, intermediate and advanced levels, a full-time course leading to the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) at level 2 in administration, and a range of other vocational courses. All students on vocational courses have a period of work experience and work placements are available to other students on request. Modern languages students undertake work experience abroad. Those learning modern languages for employment can gain accreditation through the foreign languages at work scheme. There is also a range of enhancement studies accredited through the Hampshire Open College Network, and there are extensive opportunities for students to participate in sporting activities. All FEFC-funded evening courses are available free to full-time students. Distance learning programmes were introduced in 1994.

8 The college's plans for developing vocational programmes have not always been carefully researched. The staff expertise, equipment, and facilities required to deliver and assess NVQs have been underestimated. Limited progress has been made in developing realistic simulated working environments for NVQ training at the college, and there are no arrangements for workplace assessment. The college has acknowledged the need to provide accreditation of students' prior learning, but has made little progress in developing appropriate procedures. The college proposes to offer courses validated by the open college network as a substitute for NVQs.

9 At present, there are few students in the full-time GNVQ groups. Only 10 are enrolled across the four GNVQ foundation level courses, for example. These small groups limit the range of learning experiences which can be provided for students. Students on advanced level GNVQ programmes have access to a range of GCSE and GCE A level studies to assist their entry to higher education. The college has decided not to offer additional GNVQ vocational units, although 50 per cent of advanced GNVQ students intended to go into employment rather than higher education in 1995.

10 A wide range of vocational, general recreational and basic education courses is available for adults. There is an access to higher education course in humanities which can be studied full time or part time. Students on access courses do not pay tuition or registration fees. The college has a franchise agreement with Greenwich University to enable it to provide teacher education courses through distance learning. It has funded the development of a nursery on the college site and contracted its management to a private company. The college funds 10 subsidised places for students. There is also a creche for students whose children do not require full-time places at the nursery. Courses for travellers are provided at various locations.

11 The college has strong links with its partner schools. Closer links are being developed with schools outside the college's traditional catchment area, and there is a compact with two schools whose pupils are entitled to a place at the college. The college is responsive to suggestions put forward by schools, and it provides them with feedback about their former pupils' eventual destinations. There are close relations with Southampton Institute of Higher Education. The college is the only one in the area to have a compact with the University of Southampton. There are good relationships with the Hampshire TEC. The college is in partnership with a private training provider to mount TEC-funded training schemes. However, changes in funding have led to a decline in this area of work.

12 There is a services-to-business section, headed by the director of enterprise. It offers a range of services and courses, including information technology training, modern languages, an NVQ in administration, and production of training videos. Since January 1995, 11 courses have been delivered successfully for six organisations. Links with employers are slowly developing, but they are unco-ordinated.

13 The college's promotional materials are attractive. They include a prospectus aimed chiefly at potential full-time students, booklets describing the adult and part-time study programmes, and leaflets setting out the range of services to business. The college has a marketing team with four members. The marketing development plan is ambitious and the team is overstretched. A variety of sources of labour market intelligence has been used to support six successful bids for European Social Fund money, including one for an NVQ level 3 in administration for women. The college is energetic in seeking funding from various sources. For example,

sponsorships for equipment, competitions and introduction to industry days have been provided by a number of concerns including an insurance company, a bank and the local chamber of commerce.

14 Programmes for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities include two full-time courses for 16 to 19 year old students and a course for students preparing to enter a GNVQ foundation programme. The courses offer limited practical experience for students. The college also offers a foundation for work programme and a range of courses in basic education for adults.

15 There is an equal opportunities policy, which covers issues relating to the selection and recruitment of staff; marketing and publicity; and students' entitlements. The vice-principal is responsible for its implementation, and a working party has been established to monitor it. Despite the college's equal opportunities policy, courses for students with learning difficulties are not promoted in the college prospectus. A room is available to students for religious worship. There is a chaplaincy at the college to cater for a range of faiths. It provides spiritual guidance and other support to those who request it. The college complies with sections 44 and 45 of *The Further and Higher Education Act 1992*.

GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

16 The governing body has 17 members. The TEC representative is also the chair of the governing body. There are nine independent members, one co-opted member, a student, two staff members, two parent members, and the principal. The governing body has established a register of members' interests and introduced a code of conduct. There is an appropriate search committee for new members. Three further appointments were being made at the time of the inspection. Induction arrangements for new members are sound. In addition to the search committee, there are five other committees: finance and general purposes; audit; estates and strategic planning; personnel; and remuneration. In general, the committees complement the work of the full governing body, although there is a tendency for discussions in committees to be duplicated when the corporation board meets. Governance of the college is effective. Governors and managers understand each other's roles and responsibilities, and governors place a high degree of trust in the principal and senior managers. A number of governors have close personal ties with the college which strengthen their commitment.

17 The attendance rate at governors' meetings usually exceeds 80 per cent. Governors have participated enthusiastically in the college's annual staff conference at which its strategic direction is reviewed. They receive regular information on developments in the college. Members scrutinise in detail reports prepared by managers which relate to finance, accommodation and other resource issues. They analyse less critically reports on students' achievements. They do not set quality measures by

which they can gauge the college's performance in achieving its mission. Governors have not yet evaluated their own effectiveness.

18 The college has no line management chart, but roles and responsibilities are understood. There are job descriptions for managers and terms of reference for committees. There is a college executive, comprising the principal, vice-principal and college secretary. It formulates policy, monitors progress against strategic objectives, and is responsible for the quality system. The strategic plan has been developed in consultation with governors and a broad range of college staff. It commits the college to a substantial increase in its range of courses. Following preparation of the strategic plan, academic departments and other teams across the college prepared their own development plans to align with it. The intention is that development plans should include an analysis of performance and specific proposals for improvement. Plans do not yet include improvement targets for individual subjects or for teams, and there are no adequate means for monitoring action. The extent to which departmental plans include quantitative improvement targets varies widely. In the few cases where targets do appear, there are usually no strategies for improving teaching and learning to help achieve them.

19 A directorate complements the work of the executive. It has nine members: the three faculty directors; the directors of enterprise, guidance, and human resources; and the members of the executive. The directorate advises the executive on policy and is responsible for implementing the strategic plan. Communications between senior managers and other staff are good. Staff understand the need for change and support the college's commitment to expand vocational and adult courses. In most cases, academic departments are managed satisfactorily. Some staff with cross-college responsibilities have heavy teaching loads and competing demands on their time sometimes compromise their effectiveness. Responsibilities in a number of functions, such as personnel, marketing, and student services, are shared among several staff. The degree to which these responsibilities are co-ordinated varies widely.

20 The college sets enrolment targets for each FEFC programme area, although there are no targets for individual courses. In 1994-95, the college achieved its growth target in terms of units of activity. The college's income and expenditure for the 12 months to July 1995 are shown in figures 5 and 6. The FEFC provides approximately 83 per cent of the college's income. The college's average level of funding for 1995-96 is £18.36 per unit. The median for sixth form colleges is £19.37.

21 The college has an extensive system of cost centres. Budgets are determined after detailed consultation, and funds are delegated. Cost centre managers receive regular, informative reports on their expenditure. Staff in the finance department monitor spending carefully. The college plans to increase substantially the extent of financial delegation to the three faculty directors by making them responsible for their staffing

budgets. A specification for unit costs has been devised recently. The specification does not include courses in the adult education section. In view of their increasing budget responsibilities, some directors and other managers need more financial training.

22 A management information systems department has been in operation for 18 months. It is making progress in establishing an information system to support financial decisions in particular. However, the various computerised systems are not yet integrated, and conflicting evidence arises from different sources. Data relating to student retention, number of students entered for examinations, pass rates and students' destinations are unreliable. Some vocational course performance data are not on the central system. Personnel information is kept in different parts of the college, on computer databases and in paper files. Faculty directors and heads of department do not have direct access to the computerised information which is available.

23 The college has a health and safety policy. The college secretary is responsible for its implementation. A health and safety group has members from teams across the college. The college also has an equal opportunities policy.

STUDENTS' RECRUITMENT, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

24 There are good procedures for enrolling students from schools. A liaison tutor from the college is assigned to each partner school, and the first interviews for places at the college are carried out at school. Teachers from the college visit the schools and pupils are encouraged to visit the college to sample subjects that interest them. Students with learning difficulties return to their former special school to tell pupils about the college, and later act as hosts to visiting applicants. Open days are arranged for prospective students. Applicants receive objective advice about their choice of course. Students of all ages said they were satisfied with the advice they had received.

25 Induction to the college is planned carefully. Pupils are encouraged to attend an induction day when their examinations are over, to familiarise themselves with the college. New students spend their first two weeks at college in induction tutor groups, and they follow a well-worked-out induction programme before being placed in permanent tutor groups. They are informed of their rights and responsibilities in a student agreement, which they sign. There is a vigorous students' union, to which all students belong, and most of them participate in the union's social events.

26 Arrangements for advising adult students on their studies differ from course to course. Adult students who enrol on full-time day courses are dealt with by the post-19 adviser and the adult education manager. Students on access to higher education courses are advised by the access co-ordinator and the adult education manager. Those learning English as

a second language, and adults on basic education programmes, receive guidance and support from their tutors in the adult education section. A good handbook has been produced for tutors who work with part-time adult students. The college has recently received the Basic Skills Agency kitemark for its work in the admission and support of adults on basic education programmes. All students with learning difficulties receive appropriate diagnostic assessments and effective guidance from specialist staff. Students with dyslexia have additional support from a specialist tutor. The college has so far attracted very few students with physical disabilities or significant impairments of hearing or sight.

27 The personal tutoring system for students, which was restructured in September 1995, is well organised. Tutors have received appropriate training to run it and a tutor handbook has been produced to help them. Almost all teaching staff are also personal tutors. Tutors also teach at least some of their tutees. Tutor group meetings are held at a common time each week to provide information for students, to arrange individual interviews and to respond to requests for help. Four pastoral advisers support groups of tutors. Arrangements for students to change courses are sound. Pastoral advisers have to approve all transfers. Arrangements for monitoring students' attendance at college are thorough. Absence slips are sent swiftly to tutors, who may contact parents after only a single unauthorised absence. Attendance patterns are monitored by the vice-principal. Spot checks on attendance are made from time to time.

28 Students' progress is reviewed at individual meetings with tutors and the outcomes of these are recorded. However, targets for improvement are not set. Records of reviews conducted over the last year reveal that some students persistently reported difficulties with essay writing but there was little sign of concerted action to deal with these difficulties. Students' written work shows that a significant number of them have difficulty with grammar, spelling and punctuation, and many have inadequate note-making skills. A working party has developed a numeracy policy, resulting in allocation of time to the mathematics department to help students with numeracy difficulties. The college's service for helping students with literacy, numeracy and study skill deficits was formalised only in September 1995 and it is at a very early stage of development. A room has been allocated and furnished as a study skills centre, with the intention that staff who previously provided help around the college would develop a more cohesive service. The centre is operated part time. With the exception of work in the mathematics area, few learning materials for developing basic skills have yet been acquired.

29 Staff in the study skills centre have carried out a literacy and numeracy screening test with a sample of 162 students, to assess the level of learning support required. The results show that 23 per cent of students have literacy skills at or below foundation level, and 33 per cent have numeracy skills at or below foundation level. The centre had planned to screen all students enrolling at the college in September 1996. However,

the sample has shown that the level of support required had been significantly underestimated. The deadline for screening all students has therefore been extended by a year to permit the introduction of sufficient services to meet the probable demand.

30 Three careers advisers from the Hampshire Careers Service visit the college regularly to provide employment and careers advice. They report that the number of students using the service is lower than they normally expect. A significant proportion of students aged 16 to 19 who make appointments with an adviser fail to keep them, and in many instances their tutors are unaware of this. Tutors, the higher education adviser, the access course tutor, and the adviser for students aged over 19 years, also give careers advice. Professional counselling is available regularly at the college. A nurse is also available at the college.

31 The three managers involved in students' guidance and support have other substantial commitments in the college which result in competing demands on their time. They do not meet formally, and there is no indication that their separate development plans for various parts of the service have been co-ordinated. Evidence of students' learning needs which comes to light in tutorials and lessons is not passed on to study skills staff as a matter of routine. Students who were questioned did not know that there was a higher education adviser. There are only a few measurable service quality standards. The college should draw together its policy and provision for student services.

TEACHING AND THE PROMOTION OF LEARNING

32 Of the 103 teaching sessions inspected, 49 per cent had strengths which outweighed weaknesses. Only 3 per cent had weaknesses which outweighed the strengths. The proportion of lessons graded 1 and 2 is significantly below the average for the sector identified in the *Chief Inspector's Annual Report 1994-95*. The following table shows the grades awarded to the sessions inspected.

Teaching sessions: inspection grades by programme of study

Programmes	Grade	1	2	3	4	5	Totals
GCE AS/A level		4	15	28	2	0	49
GCSE		1	3	8	0	0	12
GNVQ		2	6	5	0	0	13
Higher education and access		0	2	2	0	0	4
Basic education		4	6	5	0	0	15
Other		1	6	2	1	0	10
Total		12	38	50	3	0	103

33 The average attendance level in the teaching sessions inspected was 87 per cent. The highest attendance level was in mathematics, at 92 per cent.

34 Most courses are well planned. Schemes of work are set out clearly, although some merely list the topics to be covered. Many lessons are well planned, and activities are related carefully to their aims and objectives. Teachers often succeed in communicating their enthusiasm to students. This is the case especially in some lessons in health and social care, and in mathematics. There are good working relationships between teachers and students. Where lessons were less well planned there was sometimes insufficient time for students to complete activities or discussion. There were instances of teachers who had not planned ahead, and their students arrived at lessons ill-prepared and without the required texts. Other teachers had prepared lesson plans but did not follow them.

35 In the better lessons, the content and pace of delivery were appropriate, good use was made of audio-visual and other learning aids, the work was suitably challenging and teachers regularly checked students' understanding. Students receive constructive feedback on their work. Teachers fostered understanding of new topics by setting them in the context of earlier work. In modern languages, there were high but realistic expectations, and students were confident and accurate in their use of the language being studied. In a nursery nurses lesson, students worked effectively to design materials on opportunities for promoting learning in young children, which they were later to present to the class. They learned from each other as they exchanged ideas.

36 In weaker lessons, teachers allowed some students to answer every question and to venture their opinions repeatedly while others made no contributions. Inadequate answers to questions were not dealt with. In some practical classes, students had to wait too long for help from teachers. The pace of work was often too slow, especially in science, art and design, business, English and some of the social science lessons. Expectations of students were too low. Many of the weaker lessons were aimed at the middle or lower range of student ability, and too little account was taken of the needs of the more able.

37 There was some dull or uninspiring teaching and poor use of visual aids in English, health and social care, science, art and design and occasionally in mathematics. Some lesson handouts were poorly prepared. In one lesson, students spent an hour listening to the teacher giving instructions for the next session, and little was learned. In business studies, information technology was used effectively. In other curriculum areas, such as art and design and basic education, appropriate opportunities were neglected.

38 Most lessons for students on adult basic education programmes and for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities were effective. Staff and students shared a sense of humour, whilst at the same time being

single-minded about learning through experience. The best lessons had clear aims and objectives which were shared with students. Methods of teaching and learning were appropriately varied, and students worked at a suitable pace in congenial surroundings. There was some use of information technology. Students' marked work contained helpful comments from teachers. In the less successful lessons, teachers relied too much on oral work and too little use was made of information technology. In some continuing education lessons, the work was too theoretical; there was too little practical work and insufficient attention was paid to the use of everyday utensils and objects.

39 Where practical work was most effective, its context was often suggested by students. For example, in a group of students with learning difficulties, a student in a wheelchair wanted to know his height. This became the focus of a lesson. The constraints of measuring the height of someone in a wheelchair were fully discussed and a range of ways of going about it were explored.

STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENTS

40 Most students enjoy their studies. They work well individually and in groups. Practical work is normally carried out competently and with due regard to health and safety. Good practical skills, particularly in the use of information technology, are achieved in business and administration. Students studying German produced an informative video of their experiences while on work experience in Berlin. Students' written work in business, administration and some of the social sciences revealed their limited understanding of grammar, punctuation and spelling. In areas such as social sciences and art and design, students' note-making skills were poor.

41 In 1994 there were 651 GCE A level entries of students aged 16 to 18 in 31 subjects. The pass rates were above the national average for sixth form colleges in 15 subjects, and below in 13. The average pass rate at grades A to E was 80 per cent, which is below the national average for sixth form colleges. The number of entries and results for students aged 19 and over was unavailable. For students aged 16 to 18 in 1994, GCE A level pass rates were more than 10 percentage points above the national averages in accounting, environmental science and psychology. There were poor results in English language, communication studies, geography, sociology, economics, human biology, chemistry and mathematics. These subjects had pass rates between 15 and 38 percentage points below the national averages.

42 In 1994 the college entered 510 students aged 16 to 18 for 16 GCSE subjects. The average achievement of grades A to C was 39 per cent, which was below the national average for sixth form colleges. There were some very good results in geography, art and design, and Russian with achievement rates more than 15 percentage points higher than the national averages for these subjects. Results were particularly poor in design,

Spanish, media studies, sociology, human biology and chemistry; with A to C achievement rates around 20 percentage points below national averages. The A to C achievement rate in graphic communication was only 8 per cent. The number of entries and results for students aged 19 and over was unavailable. Enrolment data for students of all ages were insufficient to make an adequate analysis of student retention rates.

43 In 1995 results improved. There were 581 GCE A level entries of students aged 16 to 18 in 31 subjects. The pass rates were above the national average for sixth form colleges in 19 subjects; one was at the national average and 11 were below. The average pass rate at grades A to E was 85 per cent, which is about the national average. For students aged 19 and over, there were 117 entries in 11 subjects, resulting in a pass rate at grades A to E of 69 per cent, which is above the national average.

44 In 1995, students aged 16 to 18 achieved very good GCE A level results in graphic communication, history, and computing, with pass rates of 15 or more percentage points above the national averages for these subjects. The pass rate for English literature rose to equal the national average. The pass rates in mathematics and chemistry rose above the national average. English language and communication studies pass rates remained below the national average; the pass rate in English language fell to 23 percentage points below the national average. Pass rates in geography, sociology, economics and human biology remained below average. In 16 of the 31 subjects, student retention rates were below 85 per cent. There were some particularly low retention rates, ranging from 57 per cent to 74 per cent, in biology, sociology, environmental science, design and technology, art and design, history, and communication studies. Adult students achieved above average pass rates in economics, English language and English literature, psychology and business studies. Pass rates in history, human biology, French and sociology were below national averages. Student retention rates were at or above 80 per cent in human biology, photography, mathematics, electronics and psychology.

45 In 1995, GCSE results also improved. There were 552 entries in 21 subjects for students aged 16 to 18. The average achievement of grades A to C was 53 per cent, which was above the national average for sixth form colleges. For students aged 19 and over, there were 125 entries in 13 subjects. In all but two subjects, fewer than 10 students were entered for examinations, and in five of these just three or four students were entered. The average pass rate was 80 per cent, well above the national average. For students aged 16 to 18, rates of achievement at grades A to C in Spanish, graphic communication and English rose above the national averages for these subjects. The A to C achievement rate for geography fell to just below the national average. In other subjects that had been below the national average in 1994, the A to C achievement rates remained similar in 1995. The exception was design, where none of the students entered achieved the qualification at grades A to C, despite a retention

rate of 90 per cent. Student retention rates overall were satisfactory, except in media studies and travel and tourism which had retention rates of 67 per cent and 55 per cent, respectively.

46 Students aged 16 to 18 entered for GCE AS/A level examinations in 1994, scored on average 4.1 points per entry (where A=10, E=2). This placed the college among the middle third of all colleges in the further education sector on this performance measure, according to data published by the Department for Education and Employment. In 1995, students aged 16 to 18 scored an average of 4.6 points per entry, placing the college in the top third of colleges in the further education sector.

47 In 1994, the number of students enrolled on one-year GNVQ foundation level courses in leisure and tourism, and in business, were five and six, respectively. There were pass rates of 50 per cent in leisure and tourism and 60 per cent in business. Only 30 per cent of the students entered for GNVQ foundation level in health and social care, and 22 per cent of students on the manufacturing course, achieved the qualification. Retention rates were consistently poor. The highest was 60 per cent in business studies. The only GNVQ intermediate level course was in business, and none of the 19 students on the course achieved the qualification in the normal time. Single subject examination results in business skills were satisfactory or better.

48 In 1995, the number of students enrolled on GNVQ foundation level courses fell. There were nine students enrolled on the health and social care programmes, the largest of the GNVQ foundation groups. The retention rate on this course was poor at 25 per cent. There was a slight improvement in the pass rates in GNVQ foundation courses generally. However, a very low number of students remained on these courses; there were three, four or five on each. At intermediate level, only 32 per cent of students on the GNVQ in business course achieved the full qualification within the normal time, but achievements in GNVQ intermediate health and social care, and art and design, were good. Two-year GNVQ advanced level courses in art and design, business, and health and social care were introduced in 1993. All had low student numbers. The results in 1995 were generally satisfactory, but retention was poor. Single subject pass rates in business skills were generally good, with students achieving better pass rates at the lower and intermediate levels than at the higher levels.

49 Twenty-three of the 24 students who completed the access to higher education course in 1995 were successful, and 20 of them went on to higher education. The retention rate was 70 per cent. These are good results.

50 Students participate in a wide range of individual and team sports. The college has teams for rugby, volleyball, football, men's and women's basketball, hockey and netball. The men's basketball team won the under-19 basketball cup in 1995, and has won the men's county basketball league for three consecutive years. Two students have won basketball

scholarships to universities in the United States of America. Other sporting achievements include a student who is the Daily Mail southern region golf champion, one who is in the England women's golf team, and another who has achieved the Royal Life Saving Society silver cross award. College students play the principal flute, cello and double bass in the Hampshire County Youth Orchestra and one student has exhibited a drawing at the Royal Academy of Arts. In collaboration with pupils and staff from one of the college's partner schools, students performed in a production of Shakespeare's Hamlet at the international Globe Theatre festival.

51 The college records the destinations of full-time students who complete their courses and publishes these details with its examinations results. In 1994, 359 students had their destinations recorded; 30 per cent went on to higher education, 11 per cent continued in further education, 37 per cent found employment, 7 per cent began youth training courses or other activities, 5 per cent were unemployed, and the destinations of 10 per cent were unknown. In 1995, 308 students completed their courses. Of these, 41 per cent progressed to higher education, 6 per cent continued in further education, 31 per cent entered employment, 11 per cent began youth employment programmes or other activities, 6 per cent were unemployed, and the destinations of 5 per cent were not known.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

52 The college has a written definition of quality assurance, but it does not have a quality policy. The college is a member of the Hampshire group for external quality review through which staff assess curriculum quality in each other's colleges, and a number of courses are also exposed to external assessment by awarding bodies. There is no broadly representative quality group to oversee curriculum quality; the college executive undertakes this role and is responsible for the quality system. The system is overseen by a director who also has responsibility for a teaching faculty. The documentation to support the system is straightforward.

53 The college's first quality assurance cycle began in 1994. The decision was made then to operate the quality system for two years before reviewing it. The system has one more term to run before it reaches the end of its initial cycle. There are three main phases in the cycle. The first phase, in the autumn term, involves teams in analysing examination results. Teachers are expected to analyse examination performance and retention critically, and to draw up action plans. In the spring term, students are asked to complete a questionnaire designed to assess their levels of satisfaction. Teams then conduct a mid-year review of their development plans, the outcomes of which are discussed with the relevant heads of faculty. Following this, they produce self-evaluation reports. These are used by the executive to establish priorities for departments, teams and cross-college functions which are then included in development plans.

54 Whilst the scheme provides opportunities for discussion of quality issues, detailed analysis and action planning are rare. Action plans do not deal with teaching and learning methods. Feedback from students has been largely informal. The annual student questionnaire, conducted each March or April, is too late in the year to allow teachers to change their methods to suit existing students. The statistical results of the first annual survey have been used only sparingly for action planning, but there were examples of some change in the access course, which were the direct result of students' comments.

55 Although performance indicators such as national examination results, data from the national Advanced Level Information System, and retention rates are available in departments, course teams do not usually draw attention to them unless the comparisons are favourable. Accounts of performance in mid-year development reviews are not always reflected in the subsequent self-evaluation reports. There are no means to monitor progress against departmental or team plans. An improving examinations pass rate is set as a college aim, but high pass rates in some subjects continue to disguise low pass rates in others. The college does not set a benchmark for retention against which to make comparisons. Accountability for quality at the various levels in the institution is insufficiently clear. Performance is not analysed with sufficient objectivity and, overall, the present quality assurance processes are not rigorous enough to secure improvements where they are needed.

56 The college charter has been in place for two years. It appears in the student diary issued to all full-time students. Other students receive a separate copy of the charter. Staff and students are aware of its contents. The charter contains very few quantified service standards against which to monitor performance. The first step in the complaints procedure is for students to speak to the person about whom they wish to complain. Students and their parents say that this deters complaints.

57 Staff development is managed by a senior member of staff. The college has steadily increased its financial support for staff development since incorporation. The staff-development costs for 1994-95 amounted to just over £61,000, almost 2 per cent of the college budget. There is an annual staff conference to which part-time staff and governors are also invited. Staff-development activities include training to take part in the Hampshire external quality review system, and work for assessor and verifier qualifications. All internal and external events are evaluated by the staff concerned, but the college does not measure their impact on improving the quality of teaching or services, and their cost effectiveness. The college is pursuing the Investors in People award, and had a deadline of March 1996 for its achievement. Although a staff induction policy exists it has not been fully implemented. The college has no staff handbook.

58 An appraisal system for full-time staff was introduced in 1994, which includes some observation of teaching. Where staff have more than one

line manager, they may select who will appraise them. It is intended that all staff will be appraised by the end of 1996. The outcomes of appraisals are confidential. Planning for staff development relies on heads of department conveying the training needs which are revealed by reviews, to the person responsible for staff development. There is no robust mechanism to ensure that details are passed on.

59 The college's self-assessment report has sections under each of the headings in Council Circular 93/28, *Assessing Achievement*. It describes the development of the college but contains little evaluation. There is no mention of vocational examination performance. No strengths and weaknesses are listed, and there is no action plan.

RESOURCES

Staffing

60 The college has 76 full-time equivalent teachers and 55 full-time equivalent administrative and support staff. Fifty-five per cent of the full-time staff and 80 per cent of the part-time staff are women. An equal number of men and women hold positions as heads of teaching departments. At the time of the inspection there was only one woman member of the directorate. Teachers are generally appropriately qualified for the courses they teach. Ninety per cent of teachers have a teaching qualification. Seventy-three per cent have first degrees, normally in appropriate subjects although, in some areas, subjects are taught by staff whose first degree is in a different discipline. Thirteen per cent of teachers have higher degrees, and some staff have relevant examining experience. Thirty per cent have Training and Development Lead Body qualifications to enable them to work on GNVQ programmes, and a further 22 per cent are working towards them. Volunteers and other support staff involved in the adult basic education programme are appropriately qualified. A fifth of the teaching staff have some business or industrial expertise relevant to their discipline, but much of this is now out of date. Staff newly appointed in the area of health and care have recent working experience. In other areas of growth, such as business studies, art and design, and leisure and tourism, more current vocational expertise is needed.

61 Administrative support staff and most technicians are well qualified. Recent appointments have been made to strengthen finance, information management, estates, and the library. There is limited technical support in media studies and physics, and staff development is needed for technical staff in the physics area.

62 There are personnel policies and procedures for recruitment, redundancy, grievance and disciplinary issues, pay, and leave of absence. The recruitment policy has been revised recently with the advice of the equal opportunities committee. The college secretary is also the personnel manager, and has appropriate experience for the job. The college

maintains a personnel advice contract with Hampshire County Council. Personnel details are housed on the personnel database, the payroll database, and in various hard copy central files. Aspects of the personnel function are carried out by different people in different parts of the college. The college is aware of this undesirable dispersal and has set up a group to develop a central personnel function.

63 The college has been successful in reducing its staffing costs by 9 per cent over the last year. They have now reached the average for all colleges in the sector. Further efficiency gains have been made by increasing class sizes, but 27 per cent of classes still have 10 or fewer students in them. Seven per cent of classes have 20 or more.

Equipment/learning resources

64 The college has a detailed inventory of equipment which is checked and updated regularly. All curriculum areas are well equipped with a wide range of general teaching aids such as whiteboards, overhead projectors and video players. Departments have plentiful supplies of textbooks, handouts, leaflets and video tapes. Specialist equipment is adequate in most areas. There are good instruments and electronic apparatus in science; good practical equipment for mechanics and statistics in the mathematics area; commercial standard computers in the business area; a good three-dimensional design and technology workshop; and high-quality video facilities which are used, among other things, for producing videos for a major national company. There is a lack of everyday equipment such as sinks and cookers for work with students with learning difficulties, and the college does not have a realistic simulated working area for students pursuing the NVQ in administration. The range of photography, performing arts and music equipment is poor, although the deficiency in such equipment is partly remedied by the college's use of a local commercial recording studio.

65 A substantial investment in information technology has been made over the last two years. On the main site there is now a ratio of one relatively modern computer to every six full-time equivalent students. In the current academic year, the college has established an open-access information technology centre with 16 workstations, next to the library. A few other machines in departmental study areas are available for students outside timetabled hours. There are 14 modern computers for adult students in the Dibden Purlieu building and there are plans to open the centre in the evenings for the college's full-time students who live locally. There is a limited amount of computing equipment in some humanities areas and a lack of information technology and image manipulation software for art and design. The college has an information technology policy which is updated annually. A learning technology group has been established recently to widen the use of information technology as an aid to teaching and learning. The group also trains staff to use the

newly-acquired Internet link. Staff may borrow one of the college's laptop computers to help them develop their information technology skills.

66 The library is a significant weakness of the college. It is small, and it receives a low annual level of funding at approximately £8.00 per full-time equivalent student. There are only 55 study places although, when these are all occupied, students may use empty classrooms reserved for the purpose. There are other small specialist study areas around the college, for example, in science and in English. The library has only about 6,000 books. Many of these, especially in business studies, languages and science are out of date. Some book collections which were held in the science, languages and business studies departments are being transferred gradually to the library. There are three computers with compact disk read-only memory (CD-ROM) database facilities in the library and two in the nearby information technology centre. The new librarian has begun to collect statistics on library occupancy and on the use of books and videos, in order to inform the work of the recently-established library liaison committee. Electronic registration and security equipment have been introduced, but to date only about a quarter of the books are on the computerised catalogue. The college is seeking funding for a new building which would include a library with better learning resources.

Accommodation

67 The main college building is a two-storey brick construction with cement roofs and low ceilings. For many years before incorporation, the college did not receive funding for major building. Temporary classrooms were used to accommodate the growth in student numbers. The five oldest huts provide a poor environment for music, the special course for students with learning difficulties, access courses, short training courses and the creche. A larger and newer temporary building has been remodelled successfully to provide a mathematics centre. In 1993, the college acquired a good temporary building from an oil company. It has been adapted to provide five good teaching spaces for graphics and English.

68 The college has used FEFC funding and some of its own reserves imaginatively to adapt and improve the main buildings. This work has included: refurbishing most of the science laboratories; converting spare toilets to an information technology centre; developing a video-editing suite in the library; partially modernising the kitchens and creating a small students' coffee lounge; developing a staff resources and audio-visual aids area; and converting redundant laboratory space into a small suite for use in health and care. Internal redecoration has done much to brighten the environment.

69 Most classrooms are of a reasonable size and are generally suitable for the purposes to which they are put. There is particularly good accommodation for science, mathematics, English, modern languages, design technology, and business studies. Other good provision includes the small multi-media section of the library, the staff room, the staff

resource area, and the nursery. Poorer areas include one of the physics laboratories which has outdated furniture, lacks storage space, and is drab and depressing. The performing arts area is very small. The media rooms are dispersed, causing problems when moving equipment. There is no effective centre for art and design. There are limited social areas for students. Whilst the remodelled refectory is bright and cheerful, it is too small to cater for staff and students throughout the day. There is good wheelchair access to the ground floor of all buildings. The layout of the upstairs rooms prevents access by wheelchair users.

70 Many of the college's adult education courses take place in a small single-storey timber building in Dibden Purlieu, about seven miles from the college in the centre of the Waterside area. It has been redecorated and refurbished and has three large classrooms, a small seminar room, a creche and two offices. Although old, it provides a comfortable environment. It is well located for use by members of the local community and has ample car parking space.

71 The college has been able to achieve significant new building and improvement work through joint funding with various agencies. A nursery with 40 places was completed in September 1995. By September 1996, a new sports pavilion and lounge, improvements to rugby and football pitches and new tennis courts will be completed, all financed by the local rugby club and the Sports Council. In association with the New Forest District Council, a new sports hall, four badminton courts, changing rooms and a new performing arts workshop are to be built adjacent to the college.

72 The development and maintenance of accommodation are well managed. The college has an accommodation strategy, and a 10-year planned maintenance schedule which is appropriately implemented and monitored. The site manager is well qualified, and the college commissions additional advice from Hampshire County Council as required.

CONCLUSIONS AND ISSUES

73 The main strengths of the college are:

- its wide range of courses
- its partnerships with other agencies
- a widespread commitment to change
- effective pastoral support for students
- good internal communications
- some good examination results.

74 If the college is to continue to improve the quality of its work, it should address the following:

- the shortcomings of its management information systems
- the lack of rigour and accountability in the quality assurance system

-
- its underdeveloped study skills provision
 - students' underachievements and poor retention rates in some areas
 - weaknesses in the library
 - the need for continued improvement of teaching accommodation.

FIGURES

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- 1 Percentage student numbers by age (as at November 1995)

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

 - 3 FEFC-funded student numbers by mode of attendance and curriculum area (as at November 1995)

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

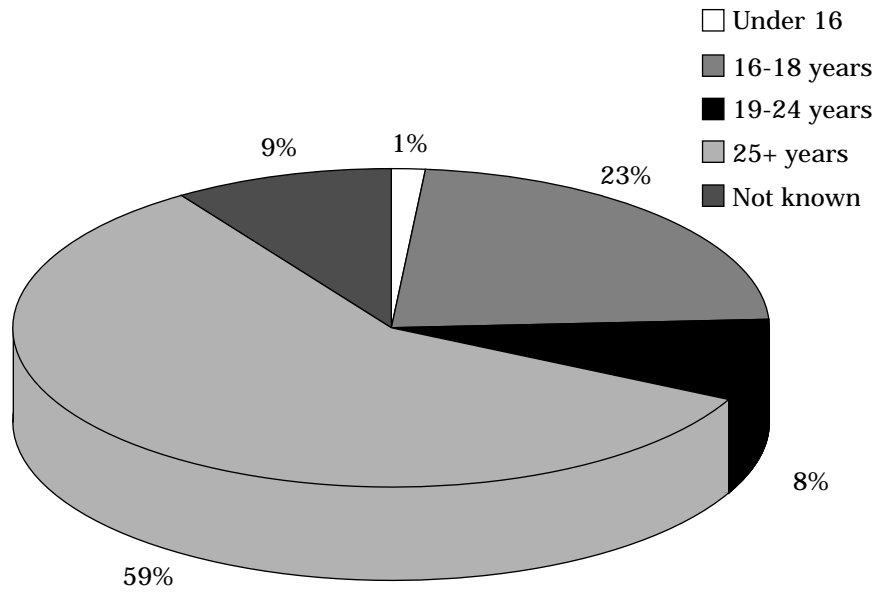
 - 5 Income (for 12 months to July 1995)

 - 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

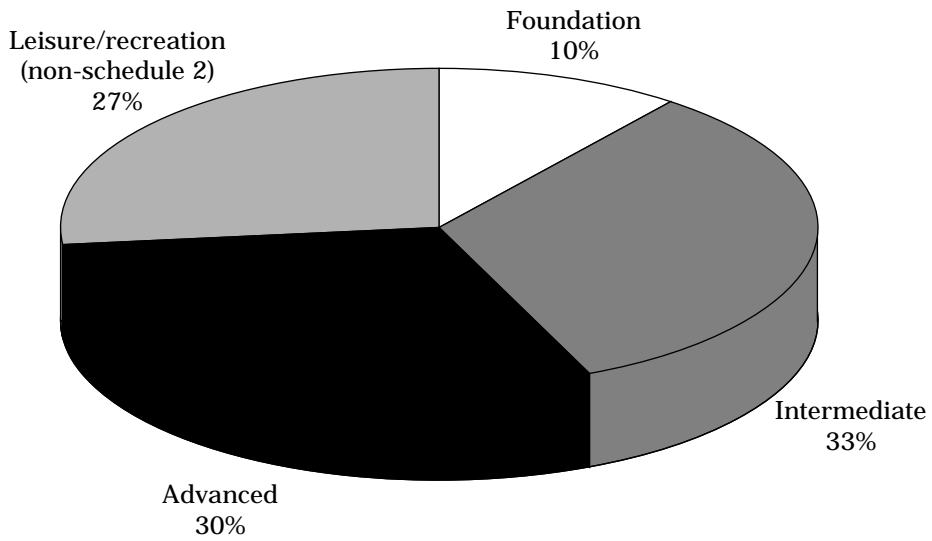
Totton College: percentage student numbers by age (as at November 1995)



Student numbers: 2,774

Figure 2

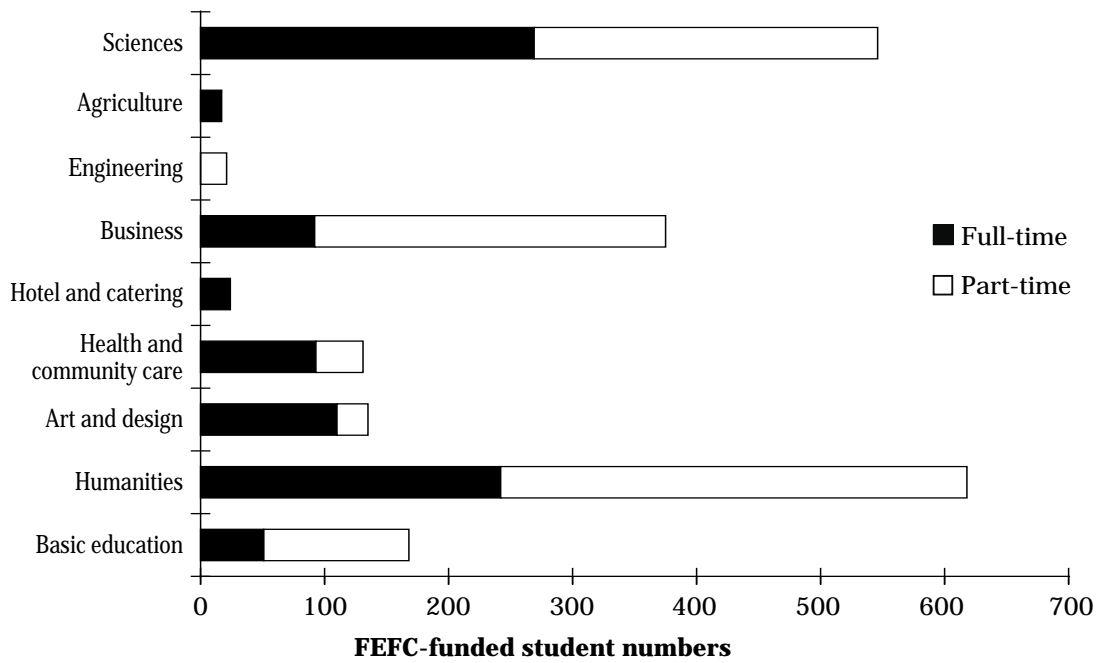
Totton College: percentage student numbers by level of study (as at November 1995)



Student numbers: 2,774

Figure 3

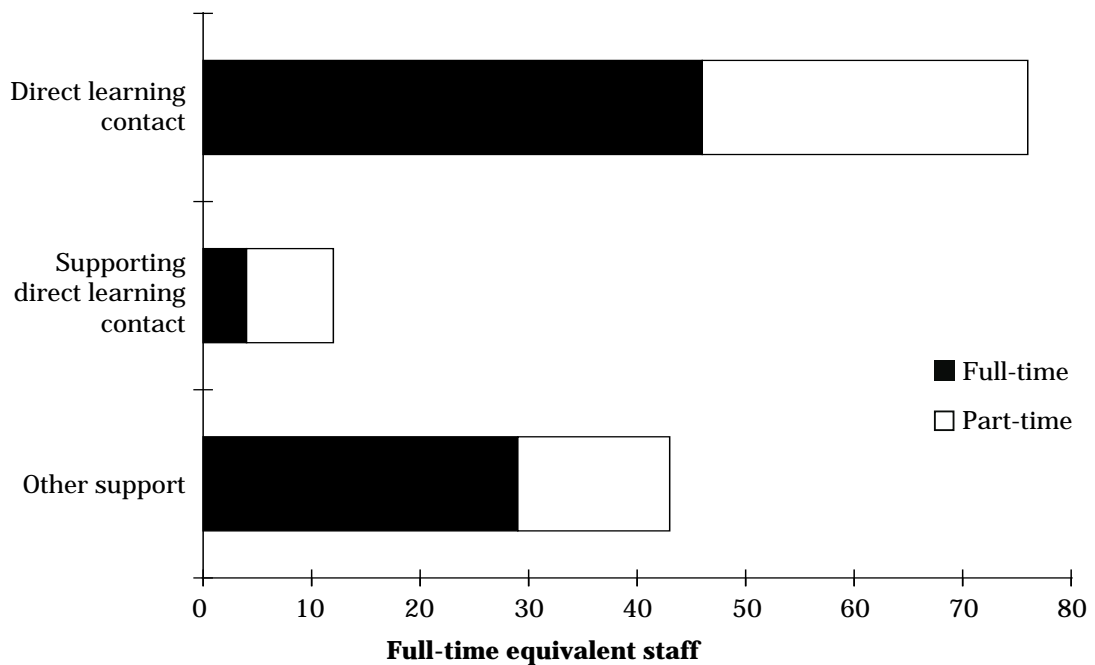
Totton College: FEFC-funded student numbers by mode of attendance and curriculum area (as at November 1995)



Student numbers: 2,035

Figure 4

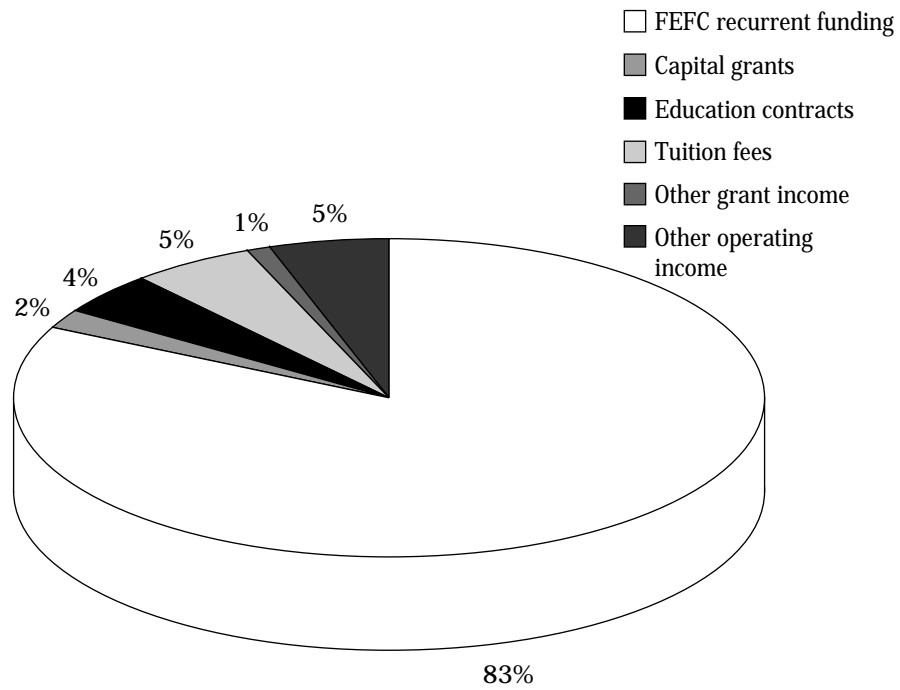
Totton College: staff profile - staff expressed as full-time equivalents (1995-96)



Full-time equivalent staff: 131

Figure 5

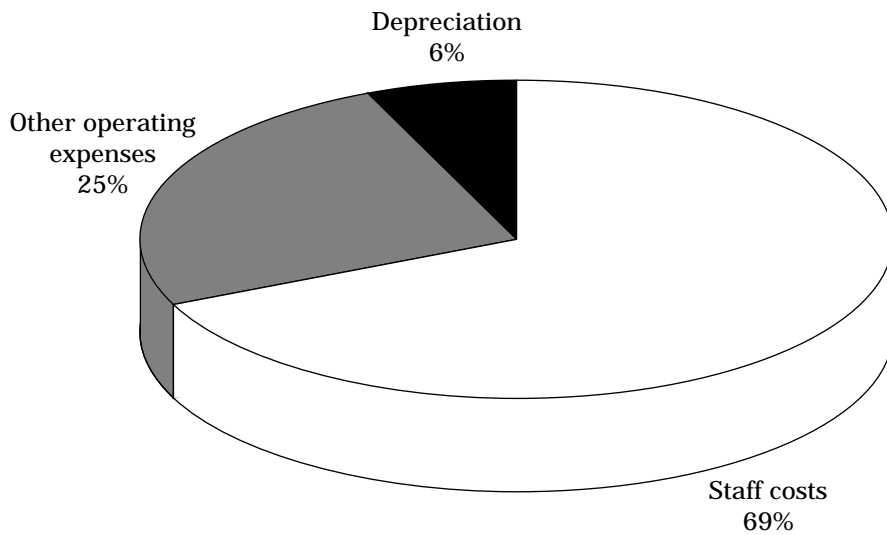
Totton College: income (for 12 months to July 1995)



Income: £3,261,000

Figure 6

Totton College: expenditure (for 12 months to July 1995)



Expenditure: £3,602,000

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