

**REPORT
FROM THE
INSPECTORATE**

Darlington College of Technology

March 1997

**THE
FURTHER
EDUCATION
FUNDING
COUNCIL**

**THE FURTHER EDUCATION
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.

*Cheylesmore House
Quinton Road
Coventry CV1 2WT
Telephone 01203 863000
Fax 01203 863100*

CONTENTS

	Paragraph
Summary	
Introduction	1
The college and its aims	2
Responsiveness and range of provision	8
Governance and management	19
Students' recruitment, guidance and support	29
Teaching and the promotion of learning	35
Students' achievements	47
Quality assurance	58
Resources	68
Conclusions and issues	82
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 1996, some 329 college inspections had been completed. The grade profiles for aspects of cross-college provision and programme areas for the 329 colleges are shown in the following table.

College grade profiles 1993-96

Activity	Inspection grades				
	1	2	3	4	5
Programme area	9%	59%	29%	3%	<1%
Cross-college provision	14%	50%	31%	5%	<1%
Overall	12%	54%	30%	4%	<1%

FEFC INSPECTION REPORT 15/97

DARLINGTON COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY

NORTHERN REGION

Inspected July-November 1996

Summary

Darlington College of Technology provides a wide range of courses at a variety of levels which offer clearly-defined routes for progression within the college and outside. It has extensive international, European and local links. Members of the board of the corporation are committed to the college and have a range of expertise that broadly matches its work. There is an effective line management structure and an extensive meetings cycle that is efficiently aligned to ensure thorough strategic planning. There is comprehensive guidance for prospective students and efficient enrolment arrangements. Teaching is generally good. Systems to support students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities on mainstream courses are well developed. Productive course reviews feed into a quality assurance system that is still developing. Staff appraisal is generally effective and valued by staff. The college is well known locally for the quality and use of its information technology equipment. Much of the accommodation has been refurbished to a high standard. The college should: develop further methods for monitoring and reporting on the progress made in implementing the strategic plan; ensure that equal opportunities matters are covered in the curriculum; address variations in the quality of induction and tutorial sessions; improve some poor retention rates; standardise the quality assurance practices across all schools; increase the opportunities in lessons for students to participate in the learning and take some responsibility for it.

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

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

Curriculum area	Grade	Curriculum area	Grade
Science, mathematics and computing	3	Health, care, hairdressing and beauty therapy	2
Construction	3	Art and design	2
Engineering	2	Humanities	2
Business	2	Adult basic education/ students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities	2
Hotel, catering, leisure, travel and tourism	2		

INTRODUCTION

1 Darlington College of Technology was inspected in three stages between July and November 1996. Enrolment and induction were inspected in July and September, curriculum areas in the week beginning 7 October, and aspects of cross-college provision in the week beginning 18 November. Inspectors spent 79 days in the college. They observed 211 teaching sessions, examined students' work and held discussions with students, parents, staff, members of the corporation and representatives from local schools, industry, the local education authority (LEA), County Durham and North Yorkshire Training and Enterprise Councils (TECs), the community and higher education.

THE COLLEGE AND ITS AIMS

2 Darlington College of Technology is celebrating the centenary of its establishment in 1897 as 'Darlington Technical College'. It is near the town centre in the borough of Darlington which is the largest town in County Durham, with a population of approximately 100,000. Darlington is at the boundaries of South Durham, North Yorkshire and the former county of Cleveland. It is preparing for unitary status in 1997. The college aims to serve the needs of the new unitary authority, South Durham, Richmondshire and the soldiers and families at Catterick Garrison in North Yorkshire. In addition to its main site in Darlington, the college provides courses at five annexes close by and at a number of other centres, the largest of which is at Catterick.

3 Darlington's economy has diversified to counteract the decline in heavy engineering and railway manufacturing. There are at least eight companies in the area that have in excess of 200 employees. Their activities include light and heavy engineering, telecommunications, manufacturing, construction, retail, financial and business services. The area surrounding the town is semi-rural. In 1995, the workforce was estimated to be 46,950 of whom 55.8 per cent were male and 44.2 per cent female. Unemployment has reduced in the last two years. In July 1995, the total stood at 9.1 per cent compared with a national average of 8.2. Of those out of work, 53.2 per cent are long-term unemployed.

4 Darlington has six secondary schools for 11 to 16 year old students. In addition, there are three schools that cater for students beyond the age of 16, a Roman Catholic school, an independent school for girls, and a school for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Since incorporation, the college has maintained its links with two schools in Newton Aycliffe, and with six schools in North Yorkshire. Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College is within a quarter of a mile of Darlington College of Technology. Otherwise the nearest sector colleges are 13 miles to the west in Bishop Auckland, and 15 miles to the east in Stockton and Middlesbrough.

5 In Darlington in 1995-96, nearly 57 per cent of young people stayed in education after the age of 16. This compares with 79 per cent nationally and 60 per cent in the northern region. Twenty-three per cent went on to youth training schemes, approximately twice the national average, a further 9.6 per cent to employment and 10.4 per cent remained unemployed. The number of school-leavers is not expected to change significantly in the years up to the millennium.

6 In 1995-96, the college's target for growth in funded units was exceeded by more than 10 per cent. The number of students enrolled at the college on Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) funded provision for the year August 1995 to July 1996 was 8,817, of whom 1,604 were full time and 7,213 part time. Student numbers by age, by level of study and by mode of attendance and curriculum area are shown in figures 1, 2 and 3 respectively. The college employs 201 full-time equivalent teaching staff and 169 full-time equivalent support staff. A staff profile with staff expressed as full-time equivalents is shown in figure 4.

7 The college's mission states that its main aim is 'to enrich the community by identifying and satisfying the training and educational needs of individuals, industry, commerce and the public sector, and to encourage greater participation'.

RESPONSIVENESS AND RANGE OF PROVISION

8 The college offers a wide range of general and vocational courses from foundation to postgraduate level. It provides courses in all the FEFC programme areas except agriculture and horticulture. The majority of students are on vocational courses. National vocational qualifications (NVQs) are available from levels 1 to 5 in most vocational areas. Many courses lead to awards from the RSA Examinations Board (RSA), City and Guilds of London Institute (C&G) and the Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC). General national vocational qualifications (GNVQs) are available in performing arts, art and design, business, health and social care, leisure and tourism, manufacturing, the built environment, hotel and catering, information technology, engineering, and science. Most of these qualifications are available at foundation, intermediate and advanced levels. The college also offers courses leading to qualifications accredited by a variety of professional bodies, for example, in quality assurance, management and accountancy. Darlington College of Technology runs one of only six pre-entry courses accredited by the National Council for the Training of Journalists. Some provision has links with universities. For example, students studying for a postgraduate diploma in management studies may join the final year of the master of business administration course at Sunderland University.

9 General certificate of education advanced level (GCE A level) courses are offered in 22 subjects and 19 recruited successfully in 1996. Ten GCE advanced supplementary (AS) subjects are taught within the GCE A level

courses. Most students studying these subjects do so on a part-time basis. Full-time GCE A level provision is offered with a range of additional elements called the 'A-plus' programme. GCE A level courses in computer studies and design technology are provided for the Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College. Thirty-four general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) subjects are available and 24 recruited successfully in 1996. Separate specialist courses for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well established. Over 100 students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have individual support which allows them to take part in other appropriate courses within the college. A recent statement on inclusiveness has been agreed which aims to make it easier for such students to join mainstream courses. In September 1996, the college began opening at the weekend but initial enrolments for the courses on offer were small. Opportunities to study by distance learning are underdeveloped.

10 Approximately 175 full-time and 755 part-time students are on courses of higher education at the college. Close links with six universities have led to a range of degree and teacher training courses. The college plays a positive role in a partnership agreement that the University of Teesside has with seven colleges of further education. The number of students following courses designed to provide access to higher education has fallen this year in all areas except science.

11 The college has a strong commitment to international developments. There are well-established links with over 25 countries. A range of courses and services to businesses are provided abroad. For example, a course leading to the BTEC certificate in management is available at Kostroma Technical Institute University in Russia. The college hosts visits from many countries, often in collaboration with local business and the Darlington Borough Council, to promote the town and build further links. Visits to European countries for full-time students are encouraged and subsidised by the college. For example, in 1995-96, some engineering students had work experience in German engineering companies. Their work was assessed and certified by the company and their achievements counted towards their final qualification.

12 There are extensive links between the college, the careers services, six local schools and 18 schools from further afield. Head teachers and careers service and college staff meet regularly as a group to discuss issues of progression. This group has established a number of positive initiatives. For example, twilight sessions are held at the college to support aspects of the school curriculum or to introduce pupils to new areas of study. Curriculum and assessment advice is provided by college staff to those local schools offering GNVQ units in years 10 and 11. College staff attend careers evenings and parents evenings and give talks to pupils according to a plan drawn up with each partner school. A construction curriculum centre, established in 1991, provides an interesting and useful context for learning for pupils in primary and secondary schools.

13 The college is playing a leading role in the development of telecommunications networks to deliver education and training. On behalf of 25 colleges in the northern region, it co-ordinated a successful bid to the Department of Trade and Industry's competitiveness fund to establish a regional computerised network with access to information provided by the Internet. The infrastructure is now in place and most of the colleges are involved in discussions to set up a company to manage future developments. As yet, the impact on the curriculum has been small but the college has been successful in gaining further funding to develop curriculum materials.

14 The college works well with the County Durham and North Yorkshire TECs. It is collaborating with North Yorkshire TEC and others to formulate plans for developing provision at Catterick. The college has representatives on a wide range of TEC management groups. Both TECs use the college to provide a range of funded programmes, including modern apprenticeships, training credits and a course for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The college has successfully bid for funding to develop guidance packs for those who have left the armed services. Discussions are taking place with County Durham TEC on the appropriateness of the qualification aims of some young people and particularly on the use of NVQ level 1 for students with poor levels of previous achievement and/or learning difficulties who are on TEC-funded courses.

15 The college is represented on a wide range of local, regional and national advisory groups. For example, a member of the college is seconded to the BBC to promote the use of multi-media products. A range of curriculum development projects is funded by the Further Education Development Agency. The college works closely with Durham County Council, Darlington Borough Council, and others, in regeneration of the area. For example, the college has worked with the Wm. Morrison Enterprise Trust and others to provide education and training facilities at Morton Park, a shopping centre on the outskirts of Darlington.

16 Links with employers are strong. Most vocational areas in the college have a task group which includes representatives from employers, the college and others who advise on developments. Most task groups work well but some are poorly attended. The college company, Quadrant, has productive links with many companies. It develops all income-generating courses and manages the catering services for the college. In 1995-96, the company successfully provided over 350 different short courses and generated an income of £424,000. Effective informal links with employers have also been established through the provision of work experience placements for students. Many employers are involved in providing support to specific courses. For example, art and journalism students produce the 'Town Crier' magazine for the local council.

17 Since 1994, the college has increased the range of outreach courses provided at centres in communities distant from the college. The initiative has been well planned with local partners and has successfully encouraged

participation by students who would not normally attend college. Courses are taught at nine centres, some of which are in areas of high unemployment and social deprivation. The provision includes some imaginative courses. For example, one for a group in Catterick, uses laptop computers to promote literacy skills. Another, for women only, is called the 'winter' programme. It is designed to give women returning to work skills in business enterprise, painting and decorating. At the end of the course students receive a set of tools and are helped to establish contacts to assist them to set up in their own businesses.

18 A comprehensive marketing strategy was approved last year. It is soundly based, setting out aims and objectives and providing a well-considered approach to marketing and promoting the college. The new approach has been successful. For example, a shop which was recently opened in the town centre provides information about the college. Between July and November 1996, it dealt with 10,000 enquiries and over 850 of these led to students joining courses. Advertising is directed at different groups of prospective students using a variety of media, including radio, direct mail and posters on buses. Prospectuses and other course information are produced to professional standards, although the higher education prospectus contains images that confirm some gender stereotyping. The number of students coming from partner schools is carefully analysed. However, until very recently little use was made of data about the proportion of 16-year-old students joining the college from each of them.

GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

19 The board of corporation has 16 members. The business and professional interests of the 10 independent members broadly match the work of the college. These members bring particular knowledge of property, legal and personnel matters. Although none has a professional financial background, several have had major financial responsibilities as senior managers. The board includes the principal and two members from teaching and support staff. There is representation from the County Durham TEC and from local community groups, and a long-standing county councillor is a co-opted member. The board has five committees including a students' liaison committee. This latter committee is led by the chairman of the corporation, and includes the president and vice-president of the students' union. Board members have registered their interests, agreed a code of conduct, and taken part in training. The college's director of corporate services acts as clerk to the board.

20 Members of the board have a clear sense of their governance role and are effective. A recent discussion paper sets out the boundaries between the board's areas of responsibility and that of college managers. The chair and vice-chair have a close and productive relationship with the principal. The board has proposed performance criteria for managers. It has set standards for the service it expects from the clerk and has

specified the form in which it receives financial reports. Improvements in the production of minutes and the scheduling of meetings have been made as a result of the board's recommendations. The cycle of committee and main board meetings are aligned with the college's planning and financial cycles. Shortcomings exist in the way actions are recorded in minutes and in the way progress is checked. The work of other groups in the college has the same shortcomings.

21 The principal leads an executive which comprises the vice-principal, the directors responsible for finance, personnel, and telematics, and the assistant principals responsible for corporate development, curriculum, and students. A particular feature of the college is the number of women in influential positions at different levels. Below the executive, the college has a strong line management structure. The academic work of the college is in 14 schools; the heads of these report to the director of learning programmes who in turn is responsible to the assistant principal, curriculum. In a successful pilot scheme, four schools associated with the business programme area have worked collaboratively as a 'sector' to improve their effectiveness and efficiency. The sector concept is being extended to cover other groups of schools. All staff in the college have up-to-date job descriptions. Roles and responsibilities are generally well understood. As a result of the recent sudden retirement of one member of staff, there is no single focus for the management of the college's estate. This is being addressed in the short term by distributing the various duties between members of the executive.

22 The executive holds weekly formal meetings and organises regular sessions away from the college to concentrate on strategic issues. Each member has considerable autonomy but they work effectively together as a team. A well-constructed cycle of meetings throughout the management structure enables the gathering of views and information from course teams and the dissemination of management decisions and policies. Heads of schools also have sessions away from the college for training and planning purposes. Important changes have been well managed. For example, a personnel philosophy and related strategic objectives have guided negotiations on new conditions of service, appraisal and performance-related pay.

23 Schools are generally well managed. There is a wide range of policies relating to the curriculum. The policies are written in a consistent style and are available in all teaching staff rooms. Teachers refer to them regularly when considering the design of courses. Basic performance indicators relating to enrolment, retention and success are collected at course level. The majority of course managers maintain full and up-to-date documentation relating to their course. Targets are set relating to enrolment and retention but not in relation to overall attendance of a course group, or examination success. The management of a few areas of the curriculum is weak. A number of organisational matters relating to the full-time GCE A level provision need further development.

24 The board of the corporation, the LEA, the TEC, college managers and staff at all levels are appropriately involved in the production of the college's three year strategic plan. The resultant strategic plan contains corporate objectives. These are not linked to timescales within the plan but are directly translated into personal annual objectives for the principal and the executive and form the focus of their performance appraisal. Timescales for the achievement of targets are agreed as part of the appraisal interview. There is no systematic way for the corporate board, other than the principal and chair, to measure on a regular basis the progress the college is making towards meeting its corporate objectives. Members of the executive use the strategic objectives to develop detailed operational plans for their areas of responsibility. Heads of schools and of service departments are also required to produce annual operating plans aligned to the strategic objectives. The quality and style of these plans is variable.

25 Cross-college groups such as the academic board and the groups relating to quality, tutoring and internal verification, report directly to the executive. The academic board has a membership drawn from most sections of the college. It is chaired by the principal. Meetings are open to all staff and invitations are extended to members of the board of the corporation. Matters raised at the academic board are often resolved rapidly. Whilst academic board members value its work, other teachers and support staff are less impressed with its activities. Ways of raising matters with the academic board are complicated and the dissemination of information from the board is ineffective. There is no cross-college focus for matters relating to equal opportunities, nor a strategy for promoting it in the curriculum.

26 In addition to the communication links established through line management structures and cross-college meetings, a monthly 'team brief' document is sent to all full-time staff, part-time staff and to the board of the corporation. This brief is the focus of particular meetings between senior and middle managers, and is a regular item on the agendas of school meetings. The brief gives information and also requests comments. Contributions from staff are considered by managers who then take summaries to the executive. This well-structured, two-way communication process is generally effective and appreciated, though a small number of staff do not believe that their views are being heard.

27 Internal budgetary control is effective. Staffing costs are managed centrally. The major part of the non-staffing budget is delegated to heads of schools and other managers. The budget delegated to each school is determined by the income generated by that school and by a consideration of its historical allocation. Schools predict monthly expenditures and are then kept informed through monthly reports. Major changes in expenditure from that predicted are queried by the executive. In 1995-96, some of the college's financial reserves were used to fund voluntary severance. This led the college to operate at a deficit but financial forecasts

for the years 1996-99 project growth in these reserves. The college's average level of funding in 1996-97 is £17.97 per unit which is the same as the median for general further education and tertiary colleges. The college's income and expenditure for the 12 months to July 1996 are shown in figures 5 and 6.

28 A commitment has been made to the use of advanced technology in managing the college. Managers regularly use electronic and voice mail systems. At the time of the inspection, course managers and heads of schools were unable to access information readily, though training for heads of schools to use the systems had taken place. Not all staff rooms contain computer workstations and many staff have to use the resource centres to access the electronic mail facility, and other software packages. In June 1996, the college's information system suffered a major breakdown and a massive loss of data. The recovery from this has been well executed. The FEFC was informed at an early stage and college managers have worked closely with the software suppliers and the college's external auditors. By November 1996 the data had been restored and validated by the auditors.

STUDENTS' RECRUITMENT, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

29 Enquiries from prospective students are dealt with efficiently. They are logged and the college monitors responses effectively. An enquiry that does not result in an enrolment is followed up. Liaison with secondary schools is well organised. Prospective students are provided with good-quality information and guidance throughout the latter part of their secondary education. The college holds two well-organised 'welcome days' that provide many opportunities for prospective students to meet staff, seek advice, and follow a selection of activities which enable them to experience what it will be like to study at the college. Enrolment procedures allow students to join courses at various times of the year, although the main period is during September. The process is efficiently managed. All enrolments are dealt with through standard systems that provide useful information on each student. This is used to identify those who need an additional interview before admission and to make a preliminary identification of those students who may need extra support. Interviews for such students are then arranged quickly.

30 There is a well-planned induction week. Students are introduced to their course and to the range of services the college provides. All full-time students are also screened to identify those who may need help with basic skills. The college has a number of ways of addressing these needs. Learning support staff offer specific basic skills courses, in-class support for individuals, and group work within mainstream courses. Not all teaching staff are convinced of the value of this support. The quality of the induction sessions varies. While some were lively and informative, others repeated material already covered and failed to hold the students' interest.

31 The college has procedures for accrediting students' prior learning. All full-time students are assigned a personal tutor. Each student works with their tutor to produce individual student action plans. Personal tutors also act as the link between the student and the central services provided by the college. The content of the tutorial programme is the responsibility of individual tutors who may use resources from the college's guidance service. There is considerable variation in the way in which tutorials are managed. On some courses, for example, the full-time GCE A level courses, students say that tutorials are unsatisfactory. The college is aware of this and has established lead tutors in each school to monitor provision and to provide training and support, where necessary. The monitoring and evaluation procedures are not yet sufficiently developed to ensure consistency.

32 The college has effective procedures for the identification and support of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. It works closely with a local special school to help pupils who transfer to the college. Students' needs are carefully assessed and arrangements made to include them in mainstream provision wherever this is possible. Most students have individually negotiated learning programmes that include timetabled support sessions. Their progress is carefully monitored and communicated to their tutors. Advice and assistance is provided to teachers who have students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in their groups. While some staff have been willing to seek such advice and to act upon it, others have been less receptive.

33 College staff work well with Durham and North Yorkshire careers services. Some course tutors give careers advice themselves whilst others use the external service. There is no common system to ensure that all students receive the aspects of careers advice they may need. Full-time students have an entitlement to work experience and the college arranges it efficiently. Ninety-seven per cent of all full-time students took part in work experience in 1995-96. An extensive database of work experience providers is used to ensure that students are given placements well matched to their aptitudes and needs. Students are carefully supervised by college staff whilst on placement. The college also organises work experience placements for students visiting from overseas.

34 Counselling is provided by trained staff who have contacts with external referral agencies, should these be needed. Students are referred to the counselling service by their tutor or may seek assistance themselves. There are helpful systems in place to assist students who have difficulties with accommodation, personal or financial problems. For example, the accommodation service has an extensive list of properties that have been inspected and approved by college staff. The college has a 14-place nursery on the main site. It is greatly valued by students but has a long waiting list. There is an agreed scale of charges but the college has a remission policy for students who find it difficult to meet these costs. A small creche is provided at Catterick but there is an unmet demand for childcare provision at the college's outreach centres.

TEACHING AND THE PROMOTION OF LEARNING

35 Of the 211 teaching sessions inspected, 67 per cent had strengths that clearly outweighed weaknesses. The attendance rate for classes inspected was 80 per cent. The best attendance rates were in engineering (89 per cent) and the largest class sizes were in leisure and tourism where there was an average of 15 students per session. The curriculum areas with the poorest attendance rates were humanities and science. These were also the programme areas with the smallest average class sizes of 9.3 and 8.6 students per session respectively.

Teaching sessions: inspection grades by programme of study

Programmes	Grade	1	2	3	4	5	Totals
GCE AS/A level		4	10	10	1	0	25
GCSE		1	11	5	1	0	18
GNVQ		6	13	9	6	0	34
NVQ		9	24	9	3	0	45
Other vocational		7	27	12	2	0	48
Higher education and access to higher education		2	5	3	0	0	10
Basic education		1	10	4	1	0	16
Other		4	7	2	2	0	15
Total		34	107	54	16	0	211

36 Schemes of work were available for most courses. Some were of a high standard and included well-sequenced topics, assessment plans and an allowance of time for revision at the end of the course. In the best practice, for example, on the Association of Accounting Technicians courses, teachers had revised their schemes in the light of annual reviews. Lesson planning was more variable. The better lesson plans included aims for each session and focused on students' learning, encouraging teachers to check on the learning achieved more frequently. Some lesson planning was inadequate. For example, in science and in construction, lesson plans did not specify the aims and objectives nor students' learning activities in sufficient detail.

37 The mathematics learning workshop was managed effectively. All students using the workshop had individual action plans that helped to ensure that their learning in the workshop progressed at an appropriate rate. Students studying for GCSE examinations were generally taught through the medium of self-study packages. GCE A level students were mainly taught through classroom activities effectively supplemented by workshop materials. In the majority of sessions inspected, the students' interest was maintained by a variety of teaching methods. These included

teacher exposition, students working individually and group work. Some handout material, such as that containing a miniature version of the teacher's overhead transparency with space allocated for the students' own notes, was of high quality. The role of workshop tutors in the computer suite had not been explained well to staff and students. A small number of students wasted time when in the computer suite and this went unchecked by teachers.

38 Relationships between science teachers and their students were relaxed and friendly but they did not always lead to productive learning. Work was set regularly and the records of students' progress on modules or components of courses were well maintained. Students on the science access to higher education course spoke highly of the support given by tutors. However, they also complained that, on a few occasions, teachers were absent without warning. The main teaching method used lacked variety and did not encourage students to participate. Students spent too much time taking notes from the blackboard, from overhead transparencies or from dictation. Often practical work was not linked to the theory being studied. Most of the students were passive in lessons; they interacted very little with the teacher or the rest of the class. Staff did not check frequently enough whether learning was taking place and did not make sufficient allowance for the range of abilities within classes.

39 Teachers of construction subjects were enthusiastic and committed to their students. They used their sound industrial experience to set lessons in context. Learning in the construction workshops was well managed. Students worked safely using a wide range of tools and specialist equipment. They were encouraged to assess their own work prior to it being marked by teachers. Clear records of students' progress were maintained. These were particularly useful when tracking students through GNVQ and NVQ credits. However, much classroom teaching lacked dynamism and some was ill-suited to that required on new courses such as GNVQs. In the less effective lessons, teachers did not take sufficient account of the different ability, knowledge or expertise of students. Too many lessons were over-dominated by the teacher, lacked variety and did not use teaching aids effectively to stimulate students' interest.

40 Students in the school of engineering benefited from teaching that was generally of a high standard. Teams of teachers gave considerable thought to course design and teaching methods. For example, in an evening class in computer-aided design, taught by a part-time teacher who had up-to-date industrial knowledge, students used industrial standard software and were provided with well-written materials which allowed them to progress at a pace best suited to their backgrounds and abilities. Courses were frequently enriched by visits, placements and foreign exchanges. Full-time advanced level students often undertook a second associated learning programme which added to, and complemented, their main study. For example, GCE AS level electronics was included as part of the BTEC national diploma in electronics course.

Assignments, and other assessed work, were set at an appropriate standard. Sometimes marking was inconsistent and insufficiently rigorous.

41 The majority of teaching sessions observed in business and administration were well prepared, managed and resourced. Teachers often made use of students' own experiences. Classroom materials, produced in the college, were of high quality. Courses designed for adult groups won high praise from students, particularly the courses at outreach centres and short courses in wordprocessing. Part-time professional and management courses were well planned. Teachers used a range of appropriate methods to encourage students to take an active part in lessons. For example, in a lively three-hour evening session on business communication students took part in a range of activities that included work on their own, in pairs and in groups. Assessments were set at standards appropriate to the level of the course and the demands of the awarding bodies. Opportunities existed for students to develop skills and knowledge which would enable them to progress to higher level courses. In a minority of sessions teachers did not pay enough attention to planning. For example, in one session on strategic financial management, the lesson plan consisted solely of the teacher's notes of content and had no indication of learning activities for students. The lesson started where the teacher happened to have finished the previous lesson and continued until the time ran out, taking little account of the need to structure learning.

42 In the school of hotel and catering and the school of sport, leisure and tourism teaching was of a high standard. Teachers were well qualified, knowledgeable and committed to their courses and students. They used a variety of teaching methods and visual aids to involve the students in the learning processes. Catering programmes were well balanced and often included additional NVQ units or qualifications in information technology. Each catering NVQ group had students at levels 1, 2, and 3 who worked well together. Students' skills and understanding were tested in busy kitchens where the demands of food production were effectively balanced with skills training. In sport, leisure and tourism lessons, teachers used question-and-answer techniques effectively to confirm that students had understood the work. They also ensured that the work set was challenging and demanding. Catering students did not have sufficient opportunity to work in key areas such as the stores or the bistro service area. Students at level 3, used as supervisors, were not always sure of their role or purpose in the practical areas.

43 In health and community studies, and in hairdressing and beauty therapy, teaching was of good quality. Teachers prepared well, involved the students and used a variety of methods that were effective in maintaining students' interest. For example, students in an NVQ care class were encouraged to relate key concepts to their personal and work experiences. This promoted considerable discussion and interest within the group and created effective links between theoretical principles and

practice. In a second-year beauty therapy class of mature students, the teaching style promoted excellent relationships which resulted in effective learning. In one lesson, an appropriate video was used to reinforce learning which was then checked effectively by a quiz at the end of the lesson. Hairdressing students were able to practise on clients coming to the salon. However, some beauty therapy students lost opportunities to deal with clients because such sessions did not start until November. Hairdressing and beauty therapy students made poor use of the sessions timetabled in the resource-based learning area. In a small number of lessons in care the teachers relied too much on one teaching method which provided insufficient variety of activities to sustain the interest of students.

44 Teachers in art, design, media studies and journalism used their links with external organisations to promote students' work. For example, the work of a student on a machine knitting course was featured in a national trade magazine. Teachers had a variety of skills that were used effectively to help students. A plentiful supply of materials, including national and regional newspapers, was used in media studies. Students were encouraged to experiment and there was abundant evidence of this in their folios. Students were generally well briefed about their projects and assignments through the use of documents in a standard format. Craft courses were designed to help students develop an awareness of modern theories on aesthetics and functional design. However, there was insufficient coverage of these theories in classes on soft furnishing. A significant number of students at advanced level had difficulties in understanding the more abstract concepts of design.

45 Courses in humanities and in education had well-documented systems and structures to support teaching and learning. Considerable thought had been given to the selection of appropriate teaching methods. In the school of education there were some particularly challenging lessons. For example, in a class leading to a certificate in teaching basic skills, the experience of the adult students was used to analyse factors that demotivate students. Theoretical concepts were skilfully introduced to categorise the problems and to select a range of appropriate solutions to overcome them. Whole class, small group and one-to-one tutorials were used to challenge and motivate students. The teaching of English, sociology and psychology was of variable quality and there was some over-reliance on formal teaching of the whole class. Teachers did not have confidence in their students' ability to take responsibility for their own learning. There was an overemphasis on giving information at the expense of critical analysis.

46 For full-time students identified as requiring additional basic skills support, programmes of work were negotiated between students and tutors. Records were kept of the progress these students made in basic skills throughout their time at the college. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities had appropriate individual learning programmes. These were well supported by tutors who varied their teaching methods to meet the differing needs of individuals. Students'

own experiences outside college were effectively linked to their studies. Students were encouraged to negotiate their learning targets and to be involved in recording their own progress and achievement. Learning support was effectively managed, particularly within the vocational areas. There was little variety and imagination in the teaching methods used in some non-practical sessions for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENTS

47 Most students in practical computing sessions made confident use of the hardware and software provided. Students on GNVQ information technology courses were encouraged to enhance their learning by taking part in external competitions. Twelve students took part in the Young Information Technology Technician of the Year competition, two making it through to the regional finals. Students on mathematics and computing courses achieved results in external examinations at, or above, the average for general further education colleges. There were poor retention and achievement rates on a number of courses. For example, only 24 per cent of the students who started a GCSE information technology course successfully completed it.

48 Progression from the science access to higher education courses was good. All other science courses had low numbers and examination pass rates that were generally poor. There were declining pass rates over three years on a number of courses. For example, the pass rate on the BTEC national diploma in science declined from 79 per cent to 50 per cent, and on GCSE chemistry from 55 per cent to 20 per cent. Students' work seen in classes and written work was of variable quality. Students on the science access to higher education course and the GNVQ intermediate course produced work of an appropriate standard. In a number of sessions students were not performing at appropriate levels. For example, students in a BTEC national diploma and certificate class made basic errors when taking an assessed practical exercise.

49 Construction students were competent, worked hard and valued their learning experience. Most completed their learning programme and pass rates were above the national average for similar work in other colleges. There was some variation between courses. The pass rate on the intermediate GNVQ course improved from 36 per cent in 1995 to 71 per cent in 1996. Pass rates on NVQ programmes varied from 44 per cent in NVQ level 3 brickwork to 100 per cent in NVQ level 2 carpentry and joinery. Most students demonstrated high standards of practical work. A number of them had achieved success in competitions at regional and national level. However, not all students were sufficiently confident to take full part in the learning activities and many sat passively for long periods. Some students, when working on their own, were not able to apply their practical skill or knowledge effectively.

50 Engineering students responded well in class and their attendance was generally good. Most courses achieved completion rates that compared with, or were better than, figures quoted in the FEFC survey, *Engineering* published in 1996. Pass rates on some courses were considerably above national averages. For example, students on the BTEC national certificate in mechanical engineering and C&G 201 basic engineering competencies had 100 per cent pass rates. However, other courses had disappointing results. The BTEC national diploma in electrical engineering had a 45 per cent pass rate and the higher national certificate in mechanical engineering a pass rate of 69 per cent. Both of these were well below the average in the further education sector.

51 Students on business studies courses worked hard and concentrated well on their studies. They made impressive progress in some groups. For example, students on the 'learn to type in 24 hours' course were touch-typing after four lessons, and students with visual-impairment quickly produced accurate copy using wordprocessors. Written work was completed to an appropriate standard and a number of projects on management and quality assurance had been implemented in the students' place of work. Students showed a good understanding of business studies subjects. NVQ portfolios were of a high standard. Some students on outreach provision had gained sufficient confidence to apply for part-time employment and others had progressed to access courses. The majority of part-time students in professional and management studies completed their courses successfully. Results were particularly impressive in courses leading to the Association of Accounting Technicians foundation and intermediate qualification, the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants stage 4 and on BTEC higher national certificates. Results were less satisfactory in GCSE business, GCSE accounting and Association of Accounting Technicians technician level courses. The full-time GNVQ in business studies courses had poor retention rates. Only eight out of 23 students completed the advanced level course and only five out of 15 completed the intermediate level course.

52 Students in the school of hotel and catering who completed their courses achieved good results. For example, three courses had pass rates that averaged 93 per cent in 1996. The GNVQ advanced course in hospitality and catering also had a pass rate of 85 per cent. Practical work was generally of a good standard. For example, a class that produced pastries supplied a number of sales outlets with good-quality products reflecting industrial practice. Students have had considerable success in local and national cookery competitions. Pass rates on general catering and national diploma courses were low; pass rates averaged 55 per cent. Students who completed sports science and leisure studies courses were successful in gaining appropriate awards and many progressed to relevant employment or higher education. Students on these courses worked well together and were prepared to take responsibility for their learning. The percentage pass rates for BTEC and GNVQ at advanced and intermediate

levels were at or above the national averages. For example, the BTEC national diploma in sports science had a pass rate of 82 per cent compared with the national figure of 72 per cent. However, retention rates on sport, leisure and tourism courses were poor.

53 Students in health and social care, hairdressing and beauty therapy displayed confidence in practical activities. They were motivated in class and responded well to individual and group exercises. Their assignment work was well organised and often visually attractive. The portfolios of students on the nursery nursing course were of good quality. Some of these included case study material plotting the developmental and recreational needs of pre-school children and highlighting the relationships between theory and practice. Research-based assignments were equally well presented. Retention and pass rates for courses varied. In nursery nursing and health studies pass rates were generally good. The GNVQ foundation level social care programme had a retention rate of 92 per cent and a pass rate of 67 per cent, well above national averages for the sector. However, the GNVQ advanced course in social care had a retention rate of 33 per cent and only an 18 per cent pass rate. Hairdressing and beauty therapy courses had good pass rates but disappointing retention rates. The development of information technology skills was not always encouraged.

54 Students on many advanced level courses in art and design had a professional and realistic attitude. Three-dimensional work was encouraged and students achieved a high standard of finish. This was particularly the case in pottery and model making. Examination results were broadly in line with national averages. However, there were variations between subjects and modes of study. The BTEC national diploma in media studies had consistently good results. Most students progressed directly to employment or to courses in further or higher education. Students in performing arts, media studies, and in many of the part-time craft courses, were enthusiastic and took part in lively and challenging debates with tutors. However, some students in art and design were more reluctant to contribute to debates and did not exhibit the same enthusiasm for their subject.

55 Students' achievements in the school of education, in languages and in archaeology were excellent. For example, students on five courses within the school of education achieved a 100 per cent pass rate. The Italian GCE A level course also achieved a 100 per cent pass rate and retained 75 per cent of its students. GCSE achievements in archaeology, Italian and Spanish were good. In one Spanish class, students' use of the language they were learning was impressive. They were able to contribute in Spanish to work in pairs, group work and role-play to the rest of the class, using the past tense correctly and showing a noticeable improvement in fluency, pronunciation and grammar. Classes in GCSE English, psychology and sociology had variable attendance and achievements that

were generally below the national averages for the sector. Retention rates on many courses, with the exception of those in education, were poor.

56 Basic education was largely aimed at achieving C&G qualifications in word and number power at various levels. Results improved dramatically last year. Students, particularly adults, were enthusiastic about their achievements and the progress they had made which allowed them to cope with education and life in general. One student stated that after 30 years of difficulty he now felt that he had gained in confidence and was sufficiently literate to deal successfully with day-to-day activities. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities spoke positively about their studies. Many gained college certificates in communications, enterprise and information technology. Four students who were registered blind achieved distinctions in RSA text processing. Progression for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities was thoroughly recorded and showed that many of them had progressed to full-time, mainstream programmes.

57 Sixty-seven per cent of students aged 16 to 18 in their final year of study on the advanced vocational courses included in the Department for Education and Employment's (DfEE's) 1996 performance tables were successful. This places the college in the bottom third of colleges in the further education sector on this performance measure. However, most of the college's students on vocational courses are over the age of 18 and their achievements are not reflected in the tables published by the DfEE.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

58 The board of the corporation and senior managers are fully committed to improving the quality of provision and intend to achieve Investor in People status during 1997. The development and implementation of processes for review and evaluation at all levels is supported by an appropriate allocation of staff time. A calendar of activities related to quality, with deadlines for completion, is produced each year. Targets are incorporated within appraisal objectives for individuals to ensure that these activities are undertaken.

59 Course teams review each course annually, reporting on attendance, retention and success in examinations. They identify five main points for action which are incorporated into the next school development plan. The head of each school produces an annual evaluation report for the director of learning programmes who compiles a summative report. At each stage, relevant action is identified. A formal response is given by members of the executive to each head of school. A minority of the school reports contain insufficient data.

60 Most course teams and service areas use questionnaires to obtain views from students about their college experience. A summary of their analysis is included in annual reviews. Students are represented at course review meetings. They are most active where they represent full-time courses or when they are mature students. Some course teams seek

employers' views through questionnaires, but feedback is more usually gathered during meetings of task groups. Parents of full-time students are asked to complete questionnaires during their attendance at parents' evenings. None of the questionnaires are standardised nor are matters such as the clarity of language checked. This has implications for the college's recent policy of including students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities on mainstream courses.

61 Teams led by a quality assurance manager audit full-time courses every two years and part-time courses every five years. Each audited course is graded on a five-point scale. To disseminate good practice, a summary of the findings is communicated to all staff. Similar systems exist for service areas. Education and training work carried out by Quadrant achieved International Standards Organisation (ISO) 9001 status in 1993, and ISO 9002 has been achieved for the college's TEC training programmes.

62 The verification process for GNVQ and NVQ programmes is well supported by an internal verification group. Training on verification matters is offered to course teams. A group of lead verifiers meet to standardise practice. Time is allocated on staff timetables for internal verification. Reports from external verifiers, moderators and examination bodies are acted upon promptly.

63 Proposals for new courses go to a subcommittee of the academic board, called the programme validation committee. Heads of schools, or programme leaders, are required to present evidence to support their bid for new courses. The committee makes recommendations to the full academic board and to the executive based on a consideration of these bids. However, proposals are occasionally turned down by the validation committee without reference to the academic board. There is well-structured support available, including a set of guidelines and a checklist for the contents of bids. In some cases, courses are expected to be delivered through the college company on a full-cost recovery basis.

64 Staff appraisal was introduced in 1994 for support staff on new contracts of employment and, in 1995, for teachers. Managers undertook appraisal training as part of a coherent staff-development strategy. The principal is appraised by the chairman of the board of the corporation. Each member of staff is appraised by his or her line manager using a set of negotiated objectives. Appraisal is viewed positively by staff. However, some managers are carrying a caseload which is too large to be effective. In at least two cases, appraisers are expected to conduct interviews with over 30 staff. An element of performance-related pay is now in place for all staff except three who are on old contracts of employment. Some heads of schools express concern at the lack of a common understanding of what constitutes acceptable performance.

65 All new staff undertake a period of probation. There is a comprehensive introductory pack, a process of induction, target-setting and a review process to support them. Staff development linked to college

priorities is determined through the appraisal system. Managers and teachers have up to 15 days of professional updating each year. Other staff are also encouraged to participate in such activities. Some use this time for research or work placements but 77 per cent of teachers attended formal training sessions in 1995-96. Staff-development training given by the college's own staff is well publicised. All staff-development activity is logged, and records circulated to managers twice a year.

66 The college has been awarded the national charter mark for excellent public services. The college charter is comprehensive, uses clear language and identifies students' entitlements and responsibilities. There are versions of the college charter in large print, in Braille, on audio tape and on a British Sign Language video. Staff and students are fully aware of the existence of the charter and it is referred to extensively during induction. It includes a commitment to consult with employers and the community. Standards are generally stated in terms of the maximum number of days for responses to requests and they are monitored by the relevant team leader. Complaints are monitored and an annual report is presented to the board of the corporation.

67 The college's self-assessment report follows the structure of Council Circular 93/28, *Assessing Achievement*. The report is mainly descriptive and, although it corresponds with the inspectorate view on the college's strengths, it lacked evaluation and was not sufficiently self-critical. The cross-referencing of statements with sources of evidence was useful to the inspection team. A senior manager had the responsibility for the process used to generate each section of the report. Few individuals within the college had seen the whole document, although many had seen parts of it.

RESOURCES

Staffing

68 Teaching staff are generally highly motivated, appropriately qualified and experienced in the subjects they teach. About 75 per cent have a first degree, equivalent professional qualification or a higher degree and have a teaching qualification at certificate of education level or above. The college wishes to improve this proportion and is therefore giving a high priority to supporting teachers working for such qualifications. Many staff have used an entitlement to work experience to keep up to date with their specialisms. There has been a recent influx of new teaching staff from a variety of backgrounds. There is now a good balance of younger and more experienced staff. Staff relations are friendly and co-operative.

69 The college has made some progress towards training and development lead body awards. In hairdressing and beauty therapy, and hotel and catering, over 60 per cent of staff have obtained appropriate training and development lead body assessor awards. However, only

28 per cent of staff in engineering have obtained these awards. One teacher and three business support staff have the assessor award used in the accreditation of students' prior learning.

70 There are 146 full-time teachers and 156 part-time teachers who are on permanent but fractional contracts. Part-time teachers value the status the contract confers and the access it gives them to college resources, appraisal and professional updating. They are well integrated with college life and are expected to attend course team meetings. Teaching staff are generally well deployed but there are some areas where staff consistently teach small groups.

71 Support staff are suitably qualified. Technicians are generally deployed effectively within schools, and work flexibly in support of teaching teams. Technical support is generally good but a few curriculum areas do not have specialist technicians. The reprographic service is efficient and highly thought of by most teachers and managers. Caretaking and maintenance staff are well deployed in sufficient numbers. There is local administrative support at most annexes. On the main site the administrative support is centralised. This arrangement works well for routine typing tasks but is not effective for the administrative support in schools. Support for information technology is also centralised and is not always sufficient to meet needs at annexes and other centres.

Equipment/learning resources

72 General teaching equipment is of good quality and most classrooms have overhead projectors, screens and whiteboards. Audio-visual equipment is provided through a centralised service and is generally adequate. Most areas of the college have equipment adapted to meet the needs of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Classroom furniture in refurbished areas is of good quality. However, some areas, for example construction, have furniture which is old and unsuitable. Sometimes the siting of some equipment is not satisfactory, for example, projector screens fixed in front of whiteboards. Blackboards are not satisfactory in some areas.

73 A wide range of good-quality specialist equipment is available. For example, there is a radio broadcast studio built to industrial standards. Training rigs in construction areas provide a realistic simulation of industrial work. Motor vehicle students are gaining experience of field servicing by maintaining a car which competes in motor rallies at international level. The college's large computer-aided design suite has modern hardware and software. Equipment is generally well maintained by college staff. In some areas equipment is becoming outdated. For example, engineering lacks sufficient modern computerised numerical control equipment.

74 Library resources are housed in the resource-based learning centre. The stock of books and periodicals is generally sufficient in quantity and of

good quality. There are a large number of compact disk read-only memory (CD-ROM) databases, including the full range of British Standards. Some of these are networked. There is a wide range of videos in the mathematics learning workshop. Some schools have inadequate arrangements for identifying and providing texts necessary for assignments; as a result, some students have not been able to obtain access to key books. Some subjects, for example humanities, have insufficient specialist books. Schools hold considerable quantities of books and other resources that are not recorded centrally. A computerised catalogue is being developed but, currently, it only holds recent book acquisitions.

75 There are extensive information technology resources to support the curriculum and a policy for their acquisition and management. The college benefits from standardisation of computer hardware and software. Overall, the ratio of students to computers is better than eight to one. Many computers are to the latest industrial standards and run suitable software applications. Networking of the resource is a growing feature extending to three of the annexes. Specialist computer facilities are available to support students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Ten high specification laptop computers are used in community centres to support the teaching of basic literacy and numeracy skills. There are still some schools that have insufficient computers and in the school of art and design they do not match industrial standards. Students and staff report occasional problems of slow network speeds.

Accommodation

76 Buildings are generally in good condition. The main site in Darlington is a modern college campus built around the former girls' high school. The college has six other sites:

- the Larchfield Street sports centre, a converted drill hall
- Stanhope Road annexe, a pair of converted semi-detached houses
- Gladstone Street annexe, a former secondary school
- Catterick annexe, army buildings and a freestanding block in the grounds of a secondary school
- two annexes that are under consideration for disposal.

Other outreach centres are based in primary schools and in community centres.

77 Professional advice on estates is gained through contracts with quantity surveyors, architects and mechanical/electrical consultants. A comprehensive accommodation survey is being updated by consultants to reflect recent developments. Estates planning is broadly in line with the college's strategic plan.

78 The main site comprises well-decorated areas that have been refurbished to a high standard. Recent improvements include the reception area, two new centres for information technology, and a video conference

room. Student baserooms in some schools, for example in health and care, and in art and design, have an obvious subject identity. Some classrooms, for example in construction and engineering, are in need of upgrading. Students report a lack of identified social spaces suitable to their needs. A training restaurant kitchen is too small for class sizes. A learning centre created from a large engineering workshop does not yet provide a stimulating environment. Initial access to the college's student counselling service is through a public area and there are no rooms dedicated to counselling activities.

79 Annexes also have some well-refurbished areas. General teaching areas are usually bright and suitable for their purpose. At the Larchfield Sports Centre recent refurbishment of the sports science area is to a high standard. There is residential accommodation for 35 people used mainly for students from overseas. It is suitable for its purpose but basic. Overall the centre retains its 'drill hall' image. The Stanhope Road annexe is suitable for the teaching of business-oriented courses. There is a general lack of wall displays in corridors and in teaching rooms in some annexes.

80 The college has made a significant commitment to providing access for wheelchair users and special facilities for those with restricted mobility or sensory difficulties. These facilities vary considerably across sites. Provision on the main site is good; there is access to the majority of floors via ramps and a lift. However, there is no access to the areas relating to hairdressing and beauty therapy, and parts of health and social care. There are areas identified as fire safety refuges for wheelchair users. Toilets adapted for people with disabilities are well located though their quality varies. At the annexes, wheelchair access is limited to the ground floor and there are few toilets for people with disabilities. Adaptations to meet the needs of those with visual impairments are at an early stage of development.

81 Sign posting within the main building is well organised and improving, but is unsatisfactory at the annexes. Road signs to assist in finding the main site and annexes are poor. Buildings are kept clean and caretakers routinely patrol sectors of the accommodation to spot problems. Maintenance overall is good. Car parking at the main site is inadequate.

CONCLUSIONS AND ISSUES

82 The particular strengths of the college are:

- a wide range of courses at a variety of levels providing good internal progression routes for students
- productive links with schools, employers, higher education and others in the local community
- the extensive commitment to the college made by members of the corporate board
- effective line management and a comprehensive meetings and planning cycle

-
- sound procedures for advising and supporting students
 - enthusiastic and committed teaching staff
 - a positive commitment to quality assurance systems
 - high-quality information technology resources
 - some accommodation that has been refurbished to high standards.

83 If it is to build on its existing strengths the college should:

- improve the mechanisms for reporting on the progress made in achieving the aims and objectives of the strategic plan
- reduce the variation in the quality of induction and tutorial sessions
- improve retention rates
- ensure that equal opportunities issues are addressed within the curriculum
- standardise the quality assurance practices across all schools
- increase the opportunities in lessons for students to participate in the learning and take some responsibility for it.

FIGURES

-
- 1 Percentage student numbers by age (as at July 1996)

 - 2 Percentage student numbers by level of study (as at July 1996)

 - 3 Student numbers by mode of attendance and curriculum area (as at July 1996)

 - 4 Staff profile – staff expressed as full-time equivalents (as at November 1996)

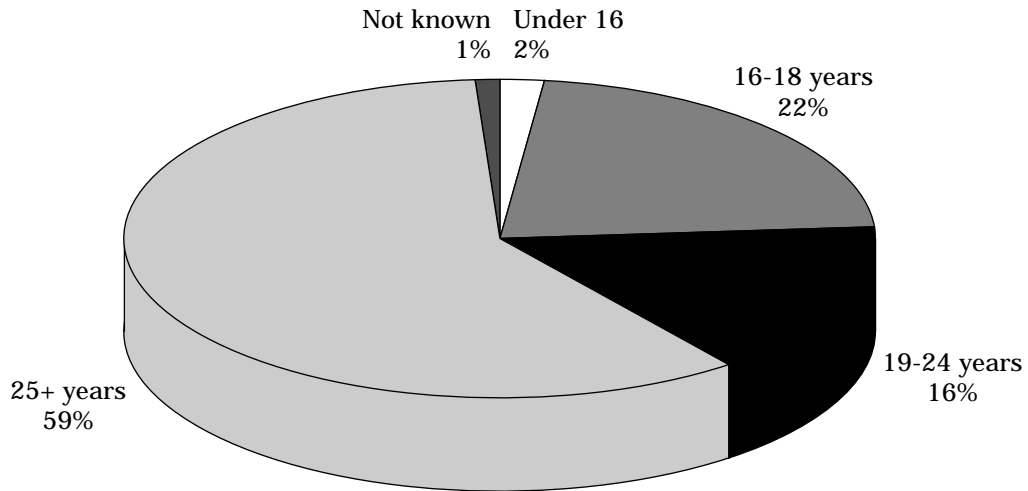
 - 5 Income (for 12 months to July 1996)

 - 6 Expenditure (for 12 months to July 1996)

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

Figure 1

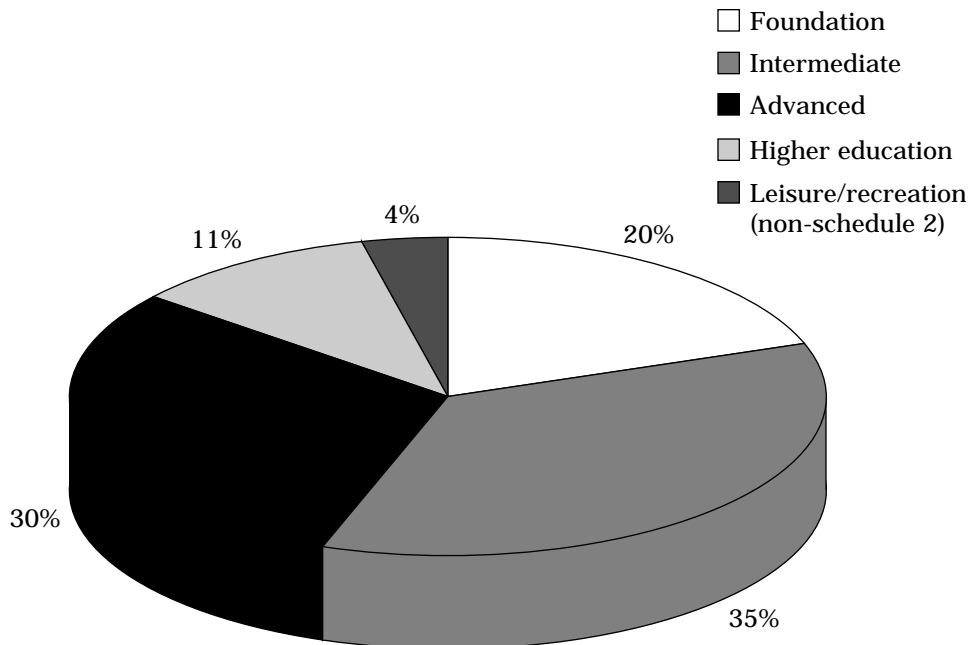
Darlington College of Technology: percentage student numbers by age (as at July 1996)



Student numbers: 8,817

Figure 2

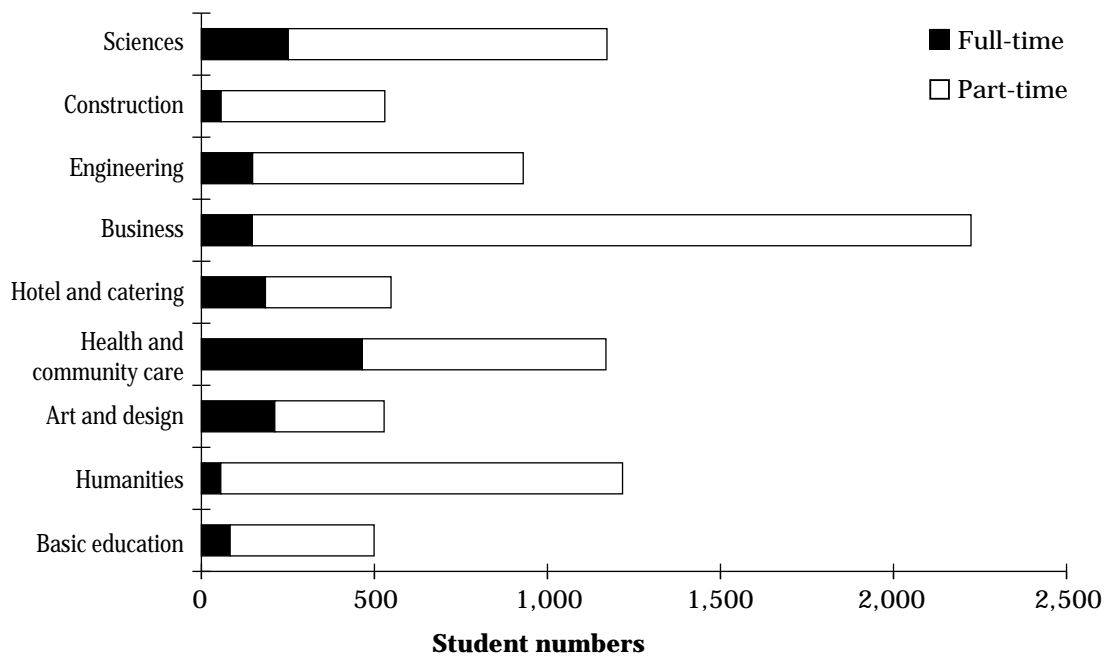
Darlington College of Technology: percentage student numbers by level of study (as at July 1996)



Student numbers: 8,817

Figure 3

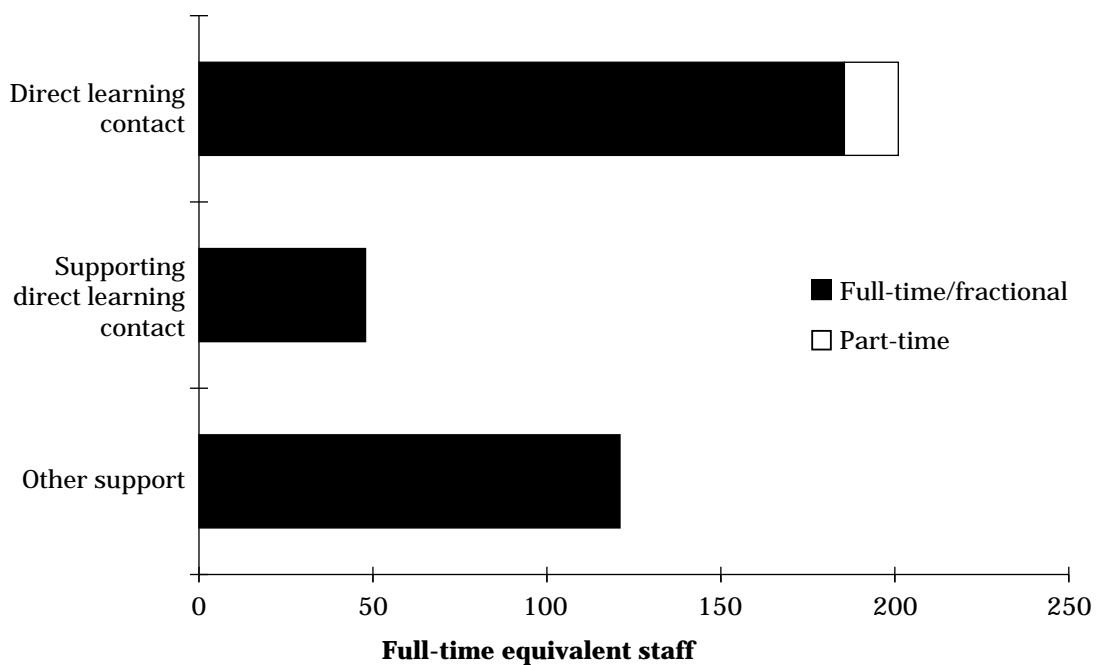
Darlington College of Technology: student numbers by mode of attendance and curriculum area (as at July 1996)



Student numbers: 8,817

Figure 4

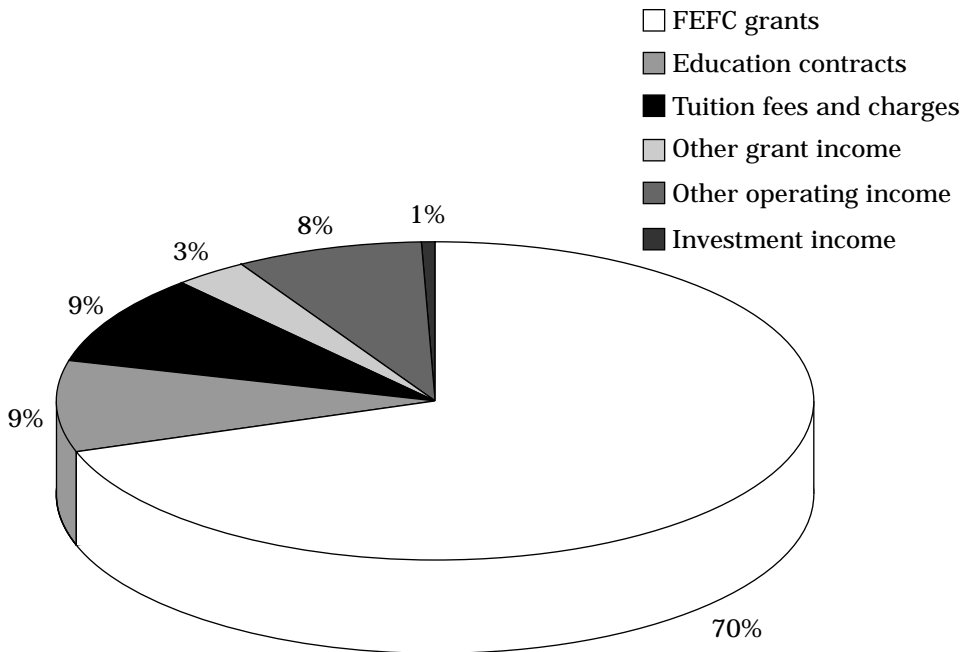
Darlington College of Technology: staff profile – staff expressed as full-time equivalents (as at November 1996)



Full-time equivalent staff: 370

Figure 5

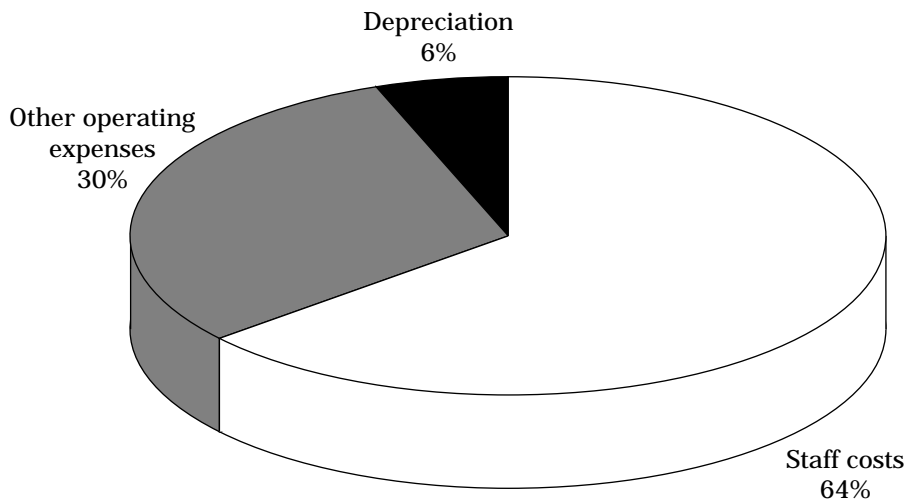
Darlington College of Technology: income (for 12 months to July 1996)



Income: £11,563,000

Figure 6

Darlington College of Technology: expenditure (for 12 months to July 1996)



Expenditure: £12,357,000

Published by the
Further Education Funding Council
March 1997