

**REPORT  
FROM THE  
INSPECTORATE**

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# **Henley College Coventry**

**June 1995**

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**THE  
FURTHER  
EDUCATION  
FUNDING  
COUNCIL**

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## **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 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.*

### **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.*

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# FEFC INSPECTION REPORT 70/95

**HENLEY COLLEGE COVENTRY**  
**WEST MIDLANDS REGION**  
**Inspected May 1994 - March 1995**

## Summary

Henley College Coventry, is a responsive and rapidly expanding provider of a wide range of further education courses. The college has a tradition of providing specialist vocational courses and courses for adults returning to study. Sound market research has led to the development of new vocational areas and an expansion of full-time courses for 16-19 year olds. Student numbers are growing rapidly, while staffing costs are reducing. Good financial management has placed the college in a healthy financial position. Cost savings have enabled significant investment in new facilities for learning, including a well equipped learning-resource centre and improved access for students with disabilities. The governors and staff of the college share a commitment to put the needs and interests of students first. There is a strong corporate ethos which encourages both flexibility of provision and careful monitoring of students' progress. Much of the teaching and the promotion of learning is of high quality and students' achievements in vocational examinations are above average. Results in GCSE and GCE A level examinations have been variable. Student retention rates require improvement. Resources for learning are good and accommodation is generally of a high standard. The college should develop its strategic planning and its performance review procedures so that all staff understand them and contribute to them. It should also provide management training for middle managers and develop college-wide standards to ensure that student experiences are consistent.

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

| <b>Aspects of cross-college provision</b>   | <b>Grade</b> |
|---|--------------|
| 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            |

| <b>Curriculum area</b>                        | <b>Grade</b> | <b>Curriculum area</b> | <b>Grade</b> |
|---|--------------|------------------------|--------------|
| Science, computing and information technology | 3            | Hotel and catering     | 2            |
| Engineering                                   | 2            | Leisure and tourism    | 2            |
| Business studies                              | 2            | Media studies          | 2            |
|   |              | Humanities             | 2            |

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## **INTRODUCTION**

1 Henley College Coventry was inspected between May 1994 and March 1995. The college's enrolment and induction procedures were inspected at the beginning of the autumn term 1994, specialist subject areas during May, October and November 1994 and aspects of cross-college provision from 6 to 9 March 1995. Eleven inspectors spent a total of 66 days in the college. They observed 144 classes involving 1,850 students, examined samples of students' work, and held discussions with governors, college staff, students, local employers, the chief executive of the Coventry and Warwickshire Training and Enterprise Council (TEC), parents, teachers from local schools and representatives of the local community. The inspection included aspects of the outreach study programmes which take place in study centres close to students' homes, focusing mainly on science and humanities.

## **THE COLLEGE AND ITS AIMS**

2 Henley College Coventry was established in 1964 as a general further education college to complement the work of the two existing colleges in the city. During the 1980s the college's curriculum range narrowed, primarily as a result of local education authority (LEA) policy. In recent years, the college has responded to demand and introduced major curriculum initiatives that include business and management training, science, health and social care courses, full-time General Certificate of Education advanced level (GCE A level) and General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) courses.

3 The largest proportion of college students come from the north-east of Coventry and from adjacent central areas. These areas are characterised by social deprivation and high unemployment. The city has an unemployment rate of 14.2 per cent, which is above the national average. The service sector in the city employs 53 per cent of the workforce and the significant, but declining, engineering sector a further 40 per cent. The largest 15 employers in the city employ 70 per cent of the workforce. Where skill shortages exist, they are mainly for technical and professional staff.

4 The college is one of three general further education colleges in Coventry. There is also a specialist college for the physically disabled. They serve a population of 300,000 within the city boundary. The city has 19 secondary schools, all with sixth forms. The college is based in a modern building and situated on a pleasant, greenfield site. The college has a well-established outreach programme which operates through some 25 schools and community centres throughout the city. The college also works in partnership with two secondary schools and with a voluntary organisation.

5 In January 1995, there were 6,207 students enrolled at the college. Of these, 1,381 were full time and 4,826 part time, making a total of 2,081 full-time equivalents. Fifty-five per cent of students were aged over 25

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years, 21 per cent were aged 19-24 and 24 per cent 16-18. Students from minority ethnic groups comprised 15 per cent of all students, including those from overseas. Sixty-two per cent of the students were female. There are few women on engineering courses and few students from minority ethnic groups study catering and hospitality or leisure and tourism. Enrolments by age and level of study are shown in figures 1 and 2. Enrolments by mode of attendance and curriculum area are shown in figure 3.

6 In 1995, the college employed 120 full-time equivalent teachers, of whom 97 were full time. There are 99 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 is to widen and increase participation in its teaching and learning programmes. It aims to provide high-quality education and training appropriate to the needs of all its clients and thereby promote individual development and economic prosperity. The strategic aims of the college include continued reduction of its average level of funding, working with partners to meet the needs of students, continued increase in student numbers, and further improvements in the responsiveness and flexibility of its courses.

#### **RESPONSIVENESS AND RANGE OF PROVISION**

8 Awareness of national issues and priorities for further education have been effectively promoted throughout the college. A member of the local TEC led a seminar for college staff on the national targets for education and training. Regular presentations to the college management forum have raised awareness of important issues. Guest speakers have included the chief executive of the local TEC, a leading local industrialist and the chief executive of the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC).

9 In the past two years, the college has rapidly increased its student numbers. The college achieved a 23 per cent growth in full-time equivalents in 1993-94, successfully countering a decline in student numbers from the previous year. Since incorporation, it has doubled the number of enrolments in the 16-19 age group to almost 1,400, mainly on full-time courses. The college aims to achieve a further 20 per cent growth in 1994-95. Sixteen per cent growth had been recorded part way through the 1994-95 academic year. Part-time courses on Saturday mornings were launched in January 1995, achieving over 250 enrolments and providing increased opportunities for existing students.

10 A broad range of vocational and general education is being developed and new courses and modes of attendance have been introduced. A full-time GCE A level programme was reintroduced in 1993. In September 1994, opportunities for full-time study were extended by the introduction of 14 new courses at GCSE and GCE A level. The college has carried out an analysis to identify remaining curricular issues. The strategic planning for further curriculum development takes account of this analysis and of the

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requirements of the FEFC and of the national targets for education and training.

11 The college now offers a wider range of vocational courses in addition to the full-time GCE A level programme. Until September 1994, the majority of the vocational provision was at intermediate and advanced levels. The need for a broader range of work was identified and courses have now been introduced at foundation level. This, together with more flexible timetabling, has improved progression routes for students. The development of General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQs) is helping the college to make good progress towards establishing effective progression routes in all areas of the curriculum.

12 Relationships with the local TEC are good. The principal is a member of the TEC liaison group and of two TEC working parties. A recent collaborative venture with the RSA Examinations Board (RSA) and the TEC has led to the college achieving one of its major strategic targets: the introduction of National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) at levels 4 and 5. The TEC view of the college is positive and supportive. Liaison with the TEC is good. The college participates in the NVQ co-ordinators' group and the work-related further education steering group.

13 The college makes good use of the TEC's labour market assessment. It has made bids for work in most of the areas in which it has the subject expertise and has also contributed information to the training access database. Representatives of local employers are appreciative of the college's initiatives. The college has conducted a survey of local employers' training needs and their levels of satisfaction with existing provision. A positive response to employers' needs has been the provision of vocationally-oriented courses in the evenings and at weekends. The college has continuing links with the LEA and also works collaboratively with two large secondary schools, several local primary schools and a range of voluntary organisations, particularly those involved with students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

14 The college has a substantial outreach programme which was originally set up under the LEA. The programme provides classes during school hours in centres close to students' homes and often in the schools which their children attend. Students from groups not normally represented in further education have been recruited. Most of the students taking part in the programme are women and some are from minority ethnic groups. A number of the courses are located in community centres, including the Indian community centre, the Muslim resource centre and, more recently, a local Muslim centre and a womens' training centre. The college has now appointed an outreach worker and an assistant to support this work. During the 1994-95 academic year, there were more than 1,500 enrolments on the outreach programme. Courses franchised to two local community schools have enrolled over 500 adult evening class students.

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15 The college makes good provision for students who require distance learning. It provides correspondence courses using commercial and college-produced materials. Twenty-seven students are currently registered. There is also a well-managed, home-study programme which offers a good range of courses for students living within a 10 mile radius of the college. Home-study students have an entitlement to three hours tutorial time. This is interpreted flexibly. Students can arrange for group tuition by pooling their tutorial entitlement. Enrolments to home-study courses more than doubled, from 118 to 262, between September 1993 and June 1994. In 1989, Henley was the first public sector college to be validated by the Council for the Accreditation of Correspondence Colleges.

16 The range of programmes in the school of technology meets the needs of potential clients and the school has good links with employers, the local TEC and the community. College provision for information technology has been improved in the period since the first specialist inspection and is now good. The school provides courses catering for the needs of varied client groups. It offers flexible arrangements for attendance at college including evening and Saturday sessions. The number of students from groups who have not normally taken further education courses has increased. The school has an exchange programme with a vocational college in Coburg, Germany. Links with universities include a college foundation year for science and technology in partnership with Coventry University, and guaranteed acceptance to a first degree programme for students successfully completing the Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) national diploma in engineering.

17 The school of business takes positive steps to cater for attendance patterns that reflect the needs of students. There is a continuous inflow of adult returners, many under European Social Fund provision, who enter programmes leading to RSA qualifications, NVQs and literacy and numeracy certification. There is also a well-publicised range of office technology and secretarial courses, including specialist courses for legal and medical secretaries. The school has achieved growth of 38 per cent since 1993, and has been successful in attracting students from minority ethnic groups. Formal links with employers are not as well established as in other areas. Recent improvements to the college's buildings have made this area of work accessible to wheelchair users. The school portfolio includes a combined degree programme, a BTEC higher national certificate and a good balance of FEFC and non-FEFC funded provision. In management studies, there is an over dependence on franchised work and a narrow range of professional courses.

18 The school of catering and hospitality management provides a good range of courses. It has recently introduced an NVQ in public-house management and a GNVQ in hospitality and catering. The college has close and productive links with a major national brewery and a public utility company. These companies have made substantial investments in the college. The college offers advice and short courses for the brewing



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industry and it is also a pilot centre for the British Institute of Innkeeping National Licencee's Certificate. This areas of provision is supported by good links with local police and magistrates. The school is one of a few centres to offer a course in vegetarian cookery for full-time and part-time students. Students from minority ethnic groups are not well represented, despite a variety of strategies to redress this situation. A course for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, 'Route into Catering', has been of particular benefit in providing such students with the opportunity to work to industrial standards in a supportive environment.

19 Travel and tourism courses were established in 1976 and leisure studies were added in 1986. The school of leisure, tourism and sports studies has grown by 40 per cent since 1993. A full range of courses, including an access course for adults, allow for a variety of student attendance patterns. Courses are reviewed regularly to meet changing market needs. The programmes are enhanced by a range of work placements, industrial visits and other external activities. Close ties exist with many local community and regional and national providers, including Coventry City Football Club and the Midlands Sports Centre for the Disabled. The college has West Midlands Area Centre status for the London Central YMCA range of exercise and fitness courses which are provided both at the main site and at outreach centres.

20 The policy of open access in the school of humanities, arts and sciences offers a route into returning to study, particularly for women with no previous history of academic success. Provision in psychology has been expanded in response to demand and the two-year GCE A level programme incorporates the opportunity to take a GCSE in child development during the first year. However, the college is reviewing its policy of open access since it allows some students to enrol on unsuitable courses, which may be a contributory factor to the high dropout rates in subjects such as GCE A level psychology.

21 The majority of courses in the school of communication focus on languages and on access to higher education for foreign students. The courses for the latter are self-financing and include a course offered in conjunction with the University of Warwick. More than 200 overseas students are recruited to the school and the courses earn significant income for the college. Modern language provision has been revitalised after being cut back drastically before incorporation. Awareness of a European dimension in the curriculum is being promoted throughout the college by a joint European and modern foreign language committee.

22 Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities participate in the work of the majority of schools. There are good links with voluntary organisations that support adult students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The college has commissioned and reviewed a report from the Council of Disabled people on the problems encountered by students with physical disabilities. The equal opportunities policy has been recently

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revised and the equal opportunities committee has good college-wide representation.

23 All college publicity and advertising, with the exception of personnel recruitment, is carried out by its marketing section. This is staffed by a director of marketing, a marketing officer and a graphic designer. It undertakes effective market research. The marketing plan reflects the overall objectives of the college's strategic plan. For the last two years the main marketing focus has been on the recruitment of school leavers. At the same time, increasing the number of points during the academic year at which adults can enrol on access and return-to-learn courses, and a highly successful campaign promoting Saturday classes, have attracted more students. Good use has been made of local radio stations, of a campaign and a recruitment caravan, and of advertising on public transport, to promote the work of the college.

### **GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT**

24 The corporation and senior management have successfully managed the college's rapid growth and change. Governors are committed and highly supportive. The corporation board has 19 members including the principal. Twelve independent members are drawn from senior levels of business, industry and the professions, including a pro vice-chancellor from a local university. There is also a nominee from the local TEC, two co-opted members from the local community, two members of staff and the president of the students' union. There are four women governors and one governor from a minority ethnic group. Members bring a wide range of experience and expertise to the corporation. Some have a direct link to particular aspects of the college's provision; for example, travel and tourism. A number of informal college contacts are also in place, including arrangements made by one of the governors for lecturers to shadow engineering industry executives. One governor is a member of the TEC regional advisory committee.

25 Governors observe the distinction between governance and management, concerning themselves with strategic matters. They receive regular financial reports and have discussed a range of appropriate issues. For example, they have called for a strategic review of GCE A level and GCSE provision following the publication of the college's annual report. The number of committees has increased since incorporation to seven. The most recent committee to be established is a curriculum advisory group. The full corporation board meetings occur at least four times a year. Meetings are scheduled well in advance. They are normally well attended and are supported by good briefing documents and concise minutes. Committees have recently reviewed their terms of reference. Governors have approved a code of conduct and have established a register of interests.

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26 The principal was appointed shortly before incorporation. He provides strong leadership within a team approach to management. The college has been reorganised since incorporation and there is now a clear line management structure. The senior management team comprises the principal, the deputy principal with primary responsibility for curriculum delivery, and three vice-principals each of whom holds a range of cross-college responsibilities which include curriculum development, finance and personnel. The balance of the workloads of senior managers should be reviewed. The curriculum is organised through six schools. Since September 1994, each school has had a number of programme managers responsible for the organisation and quality of courses within their designated programme area. There are also directors who have responsibility for cross-college curriculum development, learning support, student services and quality assurance. They lead cross-college teams of teaching and support staff. This structure has contributed towards the growing integration of staff. The senior management team, heads of school, cross-college directors and support section managers meet regularly as the college management forum.

27 The college has an active and influential academic board. Its members include the principal and elected representatives from senior management, heads of school, cross-college directors, support staff and students. Two subcommittees have been established, for curriculum and quality development. The board and its committees meet regularly to receive and approve major policies for curricula and quality, and reports from cross-college working groups. Its remit includes the internal validation of both new and existing courses.

28 The strategic plan clearly sets out the college's mission, values and corporate objectives. It is based on the principle that the needs and interests of students always come first. The strategic planning process is based upon a clearly-established cycle of activities. A key activity for the past two years has been a residential strategic-planning event. In November 1994 this was attended by all members of the management forum, programme managers, governors and students. The various development plans, which comprise the college's operating statement, are produced by heads of school, cross-college directors and support service managers. The deputy principal holds regular meetings with these managers to monitor implementation of the plans. The 1994-95 plans had a number of shortcomings including the failure to refer to corporate objectives, to set clear targets and to identify resource implications. Senior managers are holding meetings with relevant staff to ensure that the plans for 1995-96 meet the college's standards.

29 All college policies are received by the corporation and formally approved by governors. Key policies are in place, including those for equal opportunities, health and safety and learner support. The health and safety policy was recently revised to take account of changes in the college's

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management structure. The equal opportunities policy has also been revised recently. Staff training on the revised policy has yet to take place, although the college has already begun to implement the policy. Responsibility for implementing and monitoring college policies is clearly allocated to members of staff and appropriate cross-college committees.

30 Communications within the college are good. Staff are well informed and morale is high. A key element in the college's communications strategy is the weekly meeting of the management forum. The staff involved find this meeting valuable. It has helped to improve their understanding of key college issues and provides an opportunity for discussion before final decisions are made. The principal holds full staff meetings at least three times a year on key college issues. A range of other formal meetings take place. Heads of schools meet with their programme managers but these meetings vary in frequency and effectiveness. The college recognises that inconsistencies need to be addressed. A weekly newsletter is issued to all staff. The recent introduction of electronic mail has improved day-to-day communications. There is a college handbook for part-time tutors but not for college staff as a whole.

31 The college's average level of funding for 1994-95 is £20.26 per unit. The median for general further education and tertiary colleges is £18.17 per unit. Summaries of the college's income and expenditure for the 12 months to July 1994 are shown in figures 5 and 6.

32 College finance is centrally controlled. Responsibility for financial management lies with the senior management team and in particular with a vice-principal who is assisted by a finance officer. The college has moved from an inherited deficit position on incorporation to a healthy surplus. Regular financial reports are produced for governors. Cost savings have been made in a number of areas. The most significant has been a steady reduction in staffing costs, as a proportion of total expenditure, to 66 per cent in 1993-94 and set to reduce to 62 per cent in 1994-95. The consequent increase in financial flexibility has enabled the college to make substantial investments in new resources.

33 The college has a policy for setting budgets and allocating resources. The centralised system of budget control means that only a small part of the total expenditure is devolved to managers. Managers receive monthly budget reports. Staff pay budgets are controlled centrally by the deputy principal who agrees staffing requirements with heads of school. Funding for capital equipment is allocated according to priorities in the strategic plan. Managers and their teams put forward formal, costed proposals which are discussed, prioritised and approved by the senior management team. Programme managers do not hold budgets, although they can bid for resources for curricular and staff development. The college has not yet implemented a system for calculating unit costs but has undertaken thorough preparatory work to establish a base of reliable data for this purpose. The college is a member of a national pilot project on performance indicators.

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34 Early in 1994, the college decided that its existing computerised management information system could not cope with growing internal and external requirements for management information. It has recently installed a new system. However, it was decided not to replace the financial management system installed at incorporation but to keep it separate from the management information system to ensure that the accuracy of financial data and reports was maintained while the new system was being developed. The demands of external bodies and the pilot scheme for individual student records have been a priority in recent months. However, an increasing amount of internal information and analysis is now being generated for management purposes. The college has a management information system development strategy and is considering how to ensure the regular and systematic distribution of management information throughout the college, together with systematic use of performance indicators.

35 Attendance registers are normally entered into the management information system within two days of completion but the college has no system for automatically checking and acting on poor attendance. Enrolment targets are set at course and programme area level and carefully monitored; monthly reports are produced and include information on withdrawals. In the past, retention rates have been monitored at school level. Now, they are also monitored at course and programme level. The college has set global performance targets for retention and completion rates and student destinations. It will need to ensure that variances from targets are systematically considered and explained. Destination data have been collected at course and college level but the method for collecting the information is unreliable.

#### **STUDENTS' RECRUITMENT, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT**

36 In the last three years, there has been a steady improvement in the range of services offered to students. There is a student services centre staffed with specialists responsible for the admissions process and for providing initial and on-course guidance and support. The head of student services also monitors the delivery of the tutorial programme in collaboration with heads of school. The service has contributed to the recent successful growth of the college. Its use is monitored and shows a high level of activity, both through personal contact and by telephone. Personal callers at the college reception are dealt with quickly and efficiently.

37 The college contacts prospective students in various ways. These include taster days and open evenings, newspaper advertisements, and information leaflets distributed to local schools. Personal recommendation also plays a large part in advertising the college. An open evening run by the school of humanities, arts and sciences was well organised and welcoming. Course information was available from lecturers and from the high-quality college and course brochures provided. Visitors had the opportunity to view the college's facilities.

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38 Applications are processed quickly; in some cases the process from initial interview to admission and enrolment is completed within 24 hours. A full-time careers adviser helps students who are uncertain of their goals. There is a well-defined central enrolment procedure which is monitored by student services. All full-time students are interviewed by an appropriate lecturer from the subject area in which they have expressed an interest and standardisation of the interview is encouraged by the use of a central interview record. There is a separate but parallel procedure for non-standard applicants.

39 The procedures are designed to ensure that all students are made aware of the requirements of the programme on which they are enrolling. Applicants are dealt with sensitively and any special needs are noted. Those without the basic qualifications for entry to their chosen course are counselled to enrol on more appropriate courses. Some students may be admitted to a course with the proviso that they achieve the minimum qualifications within the first year of study. There are specific arrangements for those enrolling at outreach centres and for evening students. For Saturday activities, there is an open day prior to the start of the programme. Arrangements for the accreditation of students' prior learning are currently available only in office technology and catering. A member of staff has been designated to lead the development of accreditation of prior learning and plans are well advanced for it to be offered across the college.

40 The college helps students who wish to transfer between programmes and modes of study. Students receive good advice and there are standard procedures to be followed. A measure of the quality of advice and the effectiveness of the admissions procedure is the relatively small number of students who choose to transfer from one course to another. Of the 725 full-time students newly enrolled in the autumn of 1994, only 12 changed courses.

41 The induction programme ensures that all students are provided with information on college facilities and procedures, and advised of their rights and responsibilities. Induction sessions are generally valued by students. In the induction sessions inspected, information was usually disseminated effectively using a variety of methods. A few of the sessions required students to absorb lengthy and detailed information and there was too much use of educational jargon.

42 Learning support for students is always available in an extremely well-equipped, learning-resource centre which has recently been opened. It incorporates workshops for information technology, mathematics and communication skills. Students can choose to join the workshops or be referred by tutors and, already, it is heavily subscribed. Arrangements are made to tailor support to individual needs. During induction, all full-time students are screened, using Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Unit tests, to identify those requiring the basic literacy and numeracy support which is provided in the learning-resource centre. In 1994, nearly 100

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students were identified by this process, although only a small number took up the offer of extra assistance. Facilities are provided in the first-aid room for students who have specific health problems. The college has also provided a learning-support workshop at the Hearsall centre, but at the time of the inspection it had not had any clients. The college should review its strategy for encouraging students to take advantage of the various forms of support available.

43 All students have a personal tutor who plays a central role in providing support. Personal tutors teach the students in their group and are also responsible for designing an appropriate tutorial programme. This arrangement means that all students are well known to at least one member of staff. The student services section has developed a personal tutor file which outlines key areas to be covered in tutorials. The tutorial process is strengthened by the college's systematic use of national records of achievement. Students are helped and encouraged to maintain them. Individual interviews with tutors focus on personal action planning which involves students in setting their own learning objectives and measuring their own progress. There are good relations between personal tutors and students. Many tutors make themselves available to assist individual students at the end of the tutorial sessions.

44 The management of tutorials is the responsibility of individual schools. It varies widely across the college. All full-time students are timetabled for a minimum of one hour tutorial time each week. Some students find tutorials helpful. Others simply use the time to complete their assignments. A few students said that after registration had taken place they were left with nothing to do for the rest of the hour. Staff in student services are working to raise the quality of tutorials to a consistent standard. They provide tutorial support materials dealing with personal and social issues such as personal finance and budgeting, drugs and sexual health. Key staff are available to speak to tutor groups and most full-time tutor groups have taken advantage this. In-service training sessions and termly meetings are held for personal tutors. However, not all are able to attend and in-service sessions are repeated in an attempt to overcome this.

45 The college has a personal counselling service which is well known to full-time students. Advice on financial and welfare matters is readily available. The counselling service has recently been strengthened by the appointment of a professional counsellor. A recently-appointed, full-time careers officer is also based in the student-services centre. Since this appointment was made there has been a considerable increase in the amount of careers education undertaken in tutor groups, as well as an increase in individual careers advice. Students have access to good-quality careers advice materials, including computer-based materials, in the centre and in the library. Support for students making applications for higher education places should be improved.

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46 The college gives strong additional support to specific categories of student. For example, considerable emphasis is placed on childcare provision for adult students. This is particularly effective in the outreach programme, where the facility has enabled parents to return to study. The college has a nursery based in an annexe. Plans to move it to the main site have recently been approved and this will enable a modest increase in capacity. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities on the 'Route to Catering' course are well supported. They are integrated into college life and use the fitness centre, social areas and other college facilities. Three support staff are present for the majority of their sessions. These staff also support a small number of dyslexic students on mainstream courses. Students with hearing impairments have good support. The college has an agreement with the Coventry support agency for the hearing impaired, and eight students currently have signing support or other assistance provided in class. The college accommodation officer provides initial support to students from overseas and arranges accommodation for higher education students. Last year the officer was also able to provide assistance, sometimes involving personal counselling, for a small number of students who became homeless.

47 Attendance is monitored and recorded, but apart from the disciplinary procedure, which is inappropriate for this purpose, there is no college-wide formal procedure for dealing with absence. In practice, tutors usually telephone students who are absent, seek explanations and take action as necessary. The average level of attendance in the teaching sessions inspected was 79 per cent.

48 Students' views are sought through surveys, discussions with personal tutors and a student liaison committee. Students value the college facilities, especially the support they receive from staff in general and personal tutors in particular. Some have received extra help when faced with difficult assignments and heavy workloads. Most would recommend the college to their friends. A student support officer is based in the student social area. Social and dining areas have been refurbished and, although crowded at times, they cater well for students' needs outside lesson times. The students' union is supported by a liaison officer who frequently acts as a first reference point for students needing personal support. With her assistance a lively student executive committee arranges an interesting programme of activities including fund-raising events and visits from theatre groups. Access funds and a college hardship fund provide financial assistance. In the academic year 1994-95, 85 students had benefited in this way by the beginning of March. The college sports officer arranges a daily programme of sporting activities and students have access to the college fitness centre and sports hall. About 200 students use these facilities each week.

49 Parents have an opportunity to contact tutors in the first term and to attend a consultation evening later in the year. A small sample of parents who met with inspectors expressed satisfaction with the college's



arrangements for reporting students' progress. They spoke positively about the approachability of staff and the range of support offered. They were particularly impressed by the way in which their children were treated as young adults and were increasing in self-confidence and responsibility.

### TEACHING AND THE PROMOTION OF LEARNING

50 Of the 144 sessions inspected, 64 per cent had strengths which clearly outweighed weaknesses. Only 4 per cent of sessions were judged to have more weaknesses than strengths. The following table summarises the grades given to the teaching sessions inspected.

**Teaching sessions: inspection grades by programme of study**

| <b>Programmes</b>           | <b>Grade</b> | <b>1</b>  | <b>2</b>  | <b>3</b>  | <b>4</b> | <b>5</b> | <b>Totals</b> |
|-----------------------------|--------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|----------|---------------|
| GCE AS/A level              |              | 4         | 6         | 3         | 0        | 0        | 13            |
| GCSE                        |              | 0         | 3         | 4         | 0        | 0        | 7             |
| GNVQ                        |              | 5         | 11        | 8         | 2        | 0        | 26            |
| NVQ                         |              | 2         | 14        | 11        | 3        | 0        | 30            |
| Access to further education |              | 0         | 5         | 1         | 0        | 0        | 6             |
| Access to higher education  |              | 2         | 2         | 0         | 0        | 0        | 4             |
| Other vocational            |              | 1         | 30        | 18        | 1        | 0        | 50            |
| Other                       |              | 1         | 6         | 1         | 0        | 0        | 8             |
| <b>Total</b>                |              | <b>15</b> | <b>77</b> | <b>46</b> | <b>6</b> | <b>0</b> | <b>144</b>    |

51 Good relationships between staff and students enhanced the teaching and promotion of learning in all areas. The strengths of the work clearly outweighed the weaknesses in engineering, business, leisure and tourism, catering, media studies and humanities outreach programmes. In other curriculum areas there was a balance of strengths and weaknesses. Teachers generally have appropriate subject expertise and many have relevant industrial experience which they use to enrich the teaching and learning. Almost all programme areas had clear and comprehensive schemes of work. Lessons were well planned. Teachers set regular assignments and these were fairly assessed and returned within an acceptable timescale. However, there were some examples of poor planning where students had too many assignments to complete at the same time. In many of the more successful sessions, learning was reinforced by the effective use of a variety of learning aids. In business, the stock of high-quality learning materials had been carefully selected. The learning materials used in engineering, leisure, media studies and humanities were also of good quality.

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52 At the time of the specialist inspection, science courses in the college were offered almost exclusively as part of the outreach provision. The college was planning to introduce GCE A level courses and these are now running. All science courses inspected had schemes of work which included a commendable range of practical work for students without access to laboratory facilities. For example, biology students were able to view appropriate microscope slides and to observe a range of examples to illustrate their study of microbes. Tutors regularly set work which was promptly marked and returned. In some lessons, the pace of the work was too slow and the standards expected from students were below that required by examinations. Students in computing, and those using information technology in a number of contexts, were well motivated and keen to complete their practical assignments. The majority of computing lessons included a variety of teaching methods and were of an appropriate standard. However, some of the assessed work in computing was not well marked. Teachers failed to provide clear or sufficiently-detailed comments to help students to learn from their mistakes and improve. Some assignments had not been returned to students even after a two-month period.

53 Most engineering classes were well prepared. There were clear and comprehensive schemes of work and lesson plans. Students were challenged and extended, and they displayed good levels of knowledge and understanding. Some practical work was of a high standard. Lecturers were respected by students for their subject expertise and their helpfulness. Good records were kept of students' progress and achievement. In less successful sessions, the teaching was staid. Teachers failed to reinforce key points or to take account of the differing abilities of students, and the tasks set for students were not sufficiently demanding.

54 Schemes of work for business and administration programmes ensured that there was comprehensive coverage of the syllabuses. The practice office provided all students with high-quality work simulation and work experience was built into full-time courses. Students valued the flexibility of the provision which catered for their individual learning requirements. Deadlines for submission of assignments were agreed and work was marked and returned quickly. The assessment of assignments was consistent and fair. Students were aware of the appeals procedures in cases of disputed grades. In some classes, the instructions to students were confusing or delivered too quickly for them to understand so that extra time was spent later clarifying issues. This curriculum area offered good support for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, both in special courses and as part of the mainstream provision.

55 In leisure and tourism, well-planned learning programmes included opportunities for students to gain additional practical qualifications. Teaching was lively and tutors used a variety of techniques. Teachers encouraged student participation in lessons by skilful questioning. In a

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particularly successful session a video recording was used to analyse students' performance and to act as the basis for discussion. Students enjoyed the activity and the humour of the session helped them to learn. Tutors were keeping comprehensive records of students' progress. Visits to external events enhanced students' learning.

56 Catering lessons were well planned. Practical and theoretical work was well integrated. A visit to the licensing court enabled one class of catering students to experience the legal process in operation, providing a valuable opportunity for them to learn at first hand about the licensing trade. Tutors generally used the department's facilities to good effect. Food service teaching in the college restaurant was unobtrusive and helped to build students' confidence. However, some classes in kitchen skills required closer supervision on the part of teachers. Some of the classwork failed to extend students and the quality and finish of food products was not always appropriate for the level of study. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities received good support from staff and produced food which met industrial standards.

57 The curriculum in media studies was lively and challenging. It was enthusiastically and well taught. Theory and practical studio work were well integrated. Student assignments were designed to integrate practical and theoretical elements of the curriculum. A seminar on production was timed to help ensure that students acquired a better understanding before undertaking a video assignment. Students' practical work in photography and video production was supported by individual tuition from staff. Materials for theory and practical classes were of a high standard and included audio-visual aids, well-prepared handouts and well-documented briefs for students' assignments.

58 Schemes of work in modern languages were simply a breakdown of examination syllabuses and there was no coherent statement of the overall programme. Individual lessons were well structured and aims were clearly shared with the students. Students responded well to the firm but friendly atmosphere which prevailed in some sessions. Most lessons were satisfactory but the teaching lacked sparkle and in some lessons the pace of work was too slow. There was too much direction of work by the teacher and little attempt was made to test students' understanding. Classes often lacked variety, although in some classes the use of role-play was challenging and students enjoyed assessing each others' work. Teachers and students made insufficient use of the foreign language as a means of classroom communication and lessons lacked cultural content and authentic materials.

59 In psychology, detailed course documentation provided clear aims and objectives for students. Teachers drew effective connections between theory, research and personal experiences. They recognised the wide range of students' ability and of the need to develop confidence in those students with no history of academic success. Issues relating to parenting,

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child abuse, divorce, and ethnic and cultural differences were sensitively handled. The language of psychology was used consistently, and students understood key concepts. Students were able to handle statistics competently in their projects. In class, they usually worked individually on different aspects of a topic then shared information with the whole group. Sometimes, teachers and students failed to make effective connections with previous or related areas of work. In some classes, teachers dominated discussion and students had insufficient time to work on individual and group activities.

60 Some lively GCE A level classes were seen in the humanities outreach programme. Most teaching was good and some was outstanding. Many of the tasks were challenging and students worked in an atmosphere of mutual support which encouraged rigorous discussion. The work was clearly linked to further assignments. Educational visits were used to enhance students' learning. Students enjoyed their classes and were rapidly developing appropriate skills in reading, interpretation and writing. In an English class, students discussed a text with some vigour and their subsequent written work revealed a clear ability to write analytically. Sociology sessions were well planned. Students were involved in an appropriate range of activities and were developing a sound understanding of the subject. They had a good grasp of key concepts and of methodologies such as statistical sampling.

#### **STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENTS**

61 The majority of full-time students seen during the inspection were following vocational courses. Most were interested and motivated by their successes. A large group of part-time students follow science and humanities courses taught in primary schools and other off-site centres. Both science and humanities students spoke clearly and with enthusiasm about their studies and were appreciative of the opportunities available to them.

62 Most students were acquiring relevant skills and developing a thorough understanding of their subjects. Students on some business and administration courses have the opportunity to participate in Spanish classes, and to visit Spain, and this has led to high levels of linguistic skill after one year of study. However, there were a few exceptions to the general pattern of students' achievements. In science, particularly at GCSE, students were not working at the level of knowledge and understanding required for the examinations. For example, the content of some practical assignments and the level of analysis required was too simplistic. There was also a low level of achievement in one of the catering courses. Some students of psychology lacked confidence in their own ability to design, manage and analyse a project.

63 Practical work was generally sound. Workshop practice in engineering was competent and safe and the standard of some practical

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assignments was high. The approach to practical work in psychology was competent, and students displayed due respect for methodological issues and ethics. In leisure and tourism, work in practical areas was safe and challenging. Safety issues were generally well observed in media studies but there were examples of poor practice in other areas of work. For example, bags and coats were brought into food production areas and the arrangements for science practical work in the outreach programme were not always appropriate for the type of accommodation used. The college has addressed these problems.

64 In engineering and catering, where group work was a part of the course, students worked effectively together. There were also many opportunities for individual and group work in media studies, including co-operation between students working on practical assignments in the video studio. In other curriculum areas, opportunities for students to engage in groupwork were much more limited.

65 At the time of the specialist inspections, there were shortcomings in the support provided to enable students to develop study skills and core skills, including information technology.

66 Ninety-two per cent of students in the final year of study on the vocational courses included in the Department for Education's 1994 performance tables were successful. This places the college among the top third of colleges in the further education sector on this performance measure. Although student retention is variable, the pass rates of those students who complete vocational courses at advanced and intermediate levels are generally high and for many courses have been consistently above national averages over the last three years.

67 In 1994, all students entered for the examination achieved the BTEC national diploma in business and finance. Pass rates on most other business courses, including the various single subject RSA office technology courses, with almost 500 entries, were in line with national averages. In 1994, there were 100 per cent pass rates on the national diploma courses in hotel, catering and institutional operations; information technology; leisure studies; media studies; and travel and tourism. There was also a 100 per cent pass rate on the higher national certificate in engineering course. Pass rates for City and Guilds of London Institute (C&G) courses ranged from 92 to 100 per cent. In hospitality and catering, NVQ passes at levels 1 and 2 ranged from 76 to 90 per cent. Most other vocational courses had pass rates well over 80 per cent. Exceptions included the GNVQ intermediate diploma in business, where only two of the 12 students enrolled passed; the BTEC first certificate in engineering, where the pass rate dropped to 62 per cent in 1994; and the BTEC first diploma in information technology, which has had pass rates varying from 54 to 72 per cent over the last three years. In 1994, the retention rate for the access to information technology course was low and only 67 per cent of those who completed the course achieved a pass.

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68 Few full-time students have followed courses leading to GCSE and GCE A level examinations over the last three years. Most students were mature students who attended evening classes or daytime classes at outreach centres. There were 156 subject entries for GCE A level in 1994, and 59 of these were in English, where the grade A-E pass rate was 76 per cent compared with a provisional average of 72 per cent for students aged 19 and over in sector colleges other than sixth form colleges. In other subjects, the pass rates were below 60 per cent and well below national averages in most subjects. In sociology, only 32 per cent of the 28 students achieved a grade A-E pass compared with the provisional average figures of 56 per cent for sector colleges other than sixth form colleges.

69 Entries for GCSE have increased from 592 subject entries in 1992 to 727 in 1994. However, pass rates at grades A-C have decreased. In 1994, the overall pass rate, grades A-C was 47 per cent compared with a provisional average of 64 per cent for students aged 18 and over in sector colleges other than sixth form colleges. Numbers entered for English were relatively large: 61 per cent of the 199 students entered achieved grades A-C compared with the provisional national average for the subject of 72 per cent. In mathematics only 33 per cent of the 271 achieved grades A-C. Students taking sociology have performed consistently above the national average, achieving a 70 per cent pass rate at grades A-C in each of the last three years. In psychology, examination results in each of the last three years have been close to the national average. In both accounting and biology, however, examination results have declined over the last three years; only 13 per cent of students in accounting and 28 per cent of those in biology achieved grades A-C in 1994.

70 The college is at an early stage in the development of value-added analysis. Statistics for students resitting GCSE English and mathematics show that students improved on the previous grade they had achieved in 83 per cent of the examination entries. Retention rates are monitored at individual programme level. The retention rate on full-time courses in 1993-94 was 81 per cent, and on part-time courses 83 per cent. They are high on many advanced level vocational courses but within the humanities and science outreach programme there were poor retention rates, particularly for GCSE courses where rates ranged from 23 to 70 per cent. The college also monitors the destinations of full-time students. In 1994, 63 per cent of BTEC advanced level students proceeded to higher education and 35 per cent to employment, whilst 78 per cent of intermediate and 90 per cent of foundation students went on to further education. Information on student destinations, particularly of part-time students, is not yet complete or reliable.

#### **QUALITY ASSURANCE**

71 The college has a comprehensive charter, copies of which are made available to students. The part-time student handbook and full-time

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student diary contain shortened versions of the charter which list the responsibilities of the college and the rights which students possess. Targets are being set to monitor compliance with the charter. A college survey indicated that approximately 80 per cent of college students had acknowledged receipt of the charter. However, few of the students questioned were knowledgeable about its content and its implications. Staff, in contrast, were well informed about the charter. A formal complaints procedure has been in force within the college for some time. The few complaints received over the last few years have been appropriately dealt with by a member of the senior management team. Full-course refunds are given to students who have justifiable complaints.

72 The college's quality policy states that quality is the responsibility of everyone in the college and that its objective is continuous quality improvement in order to meet the needs and expectations of clients. A college quality assurance framework was introduced in September 1993. It has been influenced by quality assurance procedures developed in earlier years and by Council Circular 93/28, *Assessing Achievement*. The formal procedures which have been defined for course monitoring and review include targets based on performance indicators for enrolment, retention rates and achievement. Improvement reports, identifying action to be taken, are required from course teams each term. A quality improvement plan is also required from course teams as part of their end-of-year review document. Middle managers produce an annual quality assessment report. These documents are all based upon a standard format. Quality assurance procedures, initially based on course provision, have recently been extended to cross-college activities. The college has satisfied the TEC quality audit for youth training for the last two years.

73 An internal quality assessment report was produced for the academic year 1993-94. It is a comprehensive document which covers cross-college aspects as well as curriculum delivery. A further internal quality assessment report for 1994-95, based upon the headings found in Council Circular 93/28, *Assessing Achievement*, was produced for the inspection. Strengths and weaknesses in each area are documented and the sections are graded but the findings and the evidence on which they are based are not as tightly related as they might be. The findings in the college's report accord well with those of the inspection. The college has already carried out detailed analyses of the conclusions of the specialist inspections. In many instances, the weaknesses identified have been acted upon. For example, additional resources have been provided for several courses and cross-college areas.

74 One of the vice-principals and the director of quality have overall responsibility for quality assurance within the college. A quality subcommittee of the academic board with formal terms of reference was formed in the autumn term of 1993. A member of staff from each of the schools is represented on this committee. As part of the quality assurance system, the college has recently introduced procedures for an internal

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quality audit. Course teams have audited their courses against criteria based on Council Circular 93/28, *Assessing Achievement*. Fifteen staff received audit training in January 1995. Practice audits have been undertaken. Staff development, focused on quality assurance, has included a briefing session for heads of school and discussions with members of each school on the quality assurance system. It has been augmented by assistance from the identified quality manager in each school. The college newsletter is also used to convey information on quality to the staff on a regular basis.

75 Surveys of students' views are undertaken in the autumn, spring and summer terms. The first of these is associated with marketing, enrolment and induction; the others with course provision. Results are analysed and used to influence developments. Whilst these surveys are a useful measure of the general quality of provision, they do not include sufficiently detailed course-related questions. A student day was organised in the autumn term when some 50 students were invited to review their courses and college services with senior managers. Valuable information obtained from this meeting has influenced future provision. Students undertaking evening courses have been consulted about their perceptions of the courses they are following and the improvements which could be achieved. Some of the recommendations made by students, for example, the extension of the opening hours of the learning-resource centre and improvements to catering facilities, have been implemented.

76 Information on the examination successes achieved by different types of courses over the last three years have been collected centrally and distributed to the middle management of the college. Targets are set at course level for enrolment, retention rates and achievement using the previous year's figures as bases. As this is a new procedure, course teams have yet to gain confidence in using these measures. External examiners' and moderators' reports are collected centrally and analysed by senior managers. The recently-introduced college management information system has yet to be developed to provide course teams with information to assist them in the development of their courses.

77 All 81 course teams are required to keep course monitoring files. The quality of the information in these files is variable. Some course teams have comprehensive files which identify strengths and weaknesses, monitor student and staff perceptions of courses, identify issues and targets, and analyse retention rates, examination results and reports from external examiners and moderators. However, such practice is not yet widespread.

78 Formal course reviews are undertaken at school level. Senior management have sampled these reviews in order to monitor the quality process and the principal has conducted informal reviews of quality with many of the programme managers. Procedures for the observation of teaching as part of the review process are being defined.



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79 The staff appraisal system is at an early stage of development. Around 50 of the staff have undertaken both appraiser and appraisee training and a small number will undergo training in the near future. Appraisee training for the rest of the staff is planned. The necessary guides and forms have been produced. The college target is for all staff to be appraised by the summer of 1995. As yet, only the principal and members of the senior management team have been appraised.

80 Procedures for the induction of new full-time staff, based upon group activities, have been in place for several years. During the last 12 months, the college has adopted a different approach. On the first day at the college each new member of staff has an initial interview designed to identify individual needs. The interviewer uses a standard checklist and associated documentation. Induction takes place over a four week period. The new staff undertake some activities as members of groups and others as individuals. The college is seeking ways to improve induction for part-time staff.

81 The college has a training and development policy and is committed to achieving Investors in People status by January 1996. Around £100,000 is spent annually on staff development which is approximately 1.3 per cent of the college budget. Training and development are linked to the strategic plan and curriculum objectives. Each member of the full-time teaching staff has an entitlement of £100 per annum for individual training and development. Staff undertaking external training activities are required to disseminate the information gained to other members of the college. Only a few staff have fulfilled this requirement and the practice should be developed further. Programme managers have received little training associated with their management responsibilities. There are also opportunities for part-time staff to undertake staff development. Some have taken part in staff development associated with curriculum delivery while others have trained for the Training and Development Lead Body assessor awards. There is a programme of staff development to introduce staff to the new information technology hardware and software and 120 staff have already participated in this training.

82 In response to identified variability in assessment practice the college has developed a college-wide process of internal verification. The training of verifiers is taking place, and the college policy has been implemented for vocational courses, although there are still issues to be resolved over GCSE and GCE A level courses.

## **RESOURCES**

### **Staffing**

83 In recent years, the college has modified its staffing profile to achieve a balance of teaching and support staff which more readily reflects its needs. New staff posts have been created to provide extra learning support in the resource centre and student services. The proportion of part-time

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teaching staff is approximately 20 per cent. This permits the college to have flexibility in deploying its teachers. The student to staff ratio is currently 16.6:1. Fifty-eight per cent of teachers hold first or higher degrees. Many have appropriate professional, technical and industrial experience. Eighty-three per cent of full-time and 44 per cent of part-time teaching staff have a teaching qualification or are working towards such a qualification. Over 66 per cent of full-time and 11 per cent of part-time staff have gained or are completing their Training and Development Lead Body assessor awards. This development has been slow, given the competence base of many of the courses now offered to students. All teaching staff are working to new contracts.

84 Women are under-represented at middle and senior management levels. There is a good balance of age and experience. The average age of lecturers is 45, reflecting the effects of voluntary redundancy undertaken in the early 1990s. The college has a good complement of support staff who are effectively deployed. Most are suitably qualified for the work they undertake. In a recent audit, the college has identified the need to enhance and upgrade the skills and qualifications of some essential support staff and release teachers from some administrative and supervisory functions. Technician support for the maintenance and repair of equipment is generally good. Support staff for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are particularly effective on catering courses, where they provide students with differing degrees of help depending on their needs.

85 The college has identified a need for some psychology, catering and science teachers to update their industrial and professional skills. Some full-time staff in catering and leisure have been seconded to industry. In one case, a member of staff gained valuable experience at a local university by operating the halls of residence for tourists.

#### **Equipment/learning resources**

86 The level of provision and maintenance of equipment in the college is good. Almost all teaching areas are well resourced and have good modern furnishings. Overhead projectors and audio-visual equipment are readily available both in the college and at outreach centres. The high-quality, specialist catering equipment provides a good example of industry helping to support vocational education. A wide range of industrial standard equipment is provided for leisure and tourism courses and is also available for use by other students in the college fitness centre. Media studies students use a variety of equipment of professional quality. Business courses have access to a wide range of industrial standard software. Recent upgrading has improved the range of software at the Hearsall centre, but outreach students have no access to books and journals at their study centres. Facilities for science were limited at the time of the specialist inspection but they have recently been upgraded to provide appropriate teaching resources for courses up to GCE A level. Some of the workbenches still need replacing. Equipment and hand tools for engineering meet

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current requirements but the college has no replacement policy for large engineering equipment, much of which is old. At the time of inspection, the college was investigating how to address these issues.

87 The college is developing a programme for the regular upgrading of furniture and equipment and has a system for determining capital equipment expenditure. Purchases of over £25,000 are referred to the corporation for approval. The largest sum spent last year was on the upgrading of information technology equipment.

88 The new learning-resource centre has improved the library provision. There is now an attractive, quiet learning environment. The extension of opening hours to include evenings and Saturday mornings, has been well received by students. The library is well managed. Library staff are developing links with all curriculum areas. The number and range of books is satisfactory in most curriculum areas and the amount spent on new books is appropriate for the size of the college. The library subscribes to several newspapers and a wide variety of periodicals. There is an extensive range of other audio-visual resources including recordings of satellite television programmes. A recently installed compact disk read-only memory (CD-ROM) database network has encyclopedias and standard reference disks and a new interactive video system has packages for business training and language learning.

89 The college has improved both the amount and specification of its information technology equipment. Some 60 computers are now available to students in the information technology learning centre from 08.30 to 21.00 hours each weekday and on Saturday mornings. The ratio of full-time equivalent students to computers is 8.4:1. There are also high-quality ink jet and laser printers available on a ratio of five computers to each printer. This provides a good service to computer users. Modern, industrial-standard software is available on all the machines. Students also have on-line access to up to seven CD-ROM titles at any time through the network.

### **Accommodation**

90 The college is located on a single site to the side of a main road in a residential area. College buildings comprise various types of single-storey structures and a multi-storey block constructed at various times from the 1960s through to the 1990s. The structural fabric is good but some roof areas, parts of the external cladding and some windows, particularly those on the eastern elevation, need repair. For the outreach programme the college has access to 23 centres located in primary schools and community centres. Much of the accommodation is good. However, the basement area and canteen area in one of the principal outreach centres are bare and unwelcoming.

91 During the inspection, a new and more attractive foyer was under construction. The teaching rooms and specialist-learning areas are of an

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acceptable size and layout to accommodate the number of students. Some staffrooms are overcrowded and have limited workspace and storage for teaching aids and documents. Lack of storage space is an issue in the college. In recent times, the college has carried out extensive refurbishment and some of the best accommodation includes the learning-resource centre, student social areas, the fitness centre, the conference centre and the Henley's restaurant which forms part of the catering provision. Following the findings of the specialist inspections, the college has substantially improved the science area.

92 The college buildings are clean and free from litter and graffiti. Internal finishes and decoration throughout the site are well maintained. Space utilisation is low. A comprehensive accommodation strategy seeks to provide efficient and effective use of the buildings by assessing their potential against the strategic goals of the institution. With the aid of consultants the college has produced a detailed, long-term maintenance programme that should ensure that its buildings remain in good condition. The college has a proposal to develop some exciting and imaginative sports facilities which include a stadium for national league basketball.

93 Access for those with limited mobility is generally good throughout the college. The recent refurbishment work included improvements for wheelchair users; for example the widening of lifts and the relocation of their control panels. Entry to the sports hall and fitness centre in the college is restricted by a staircase.

94 The college has sufficient car parking facilities, which are well lit. Staff and students find this reassuring during winter nights. Large areas of road surface in the car parks and driveways are in need of repair. Landscaped areas lack appeal and external signposting is poor, especially on the approach to college.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND ISSUES**

95 The strengths of the college are:

- governors and staff of the college who share a commitment to putting the students first
- a strong corporate ethos which encourages flexibility of provision and careful monitoring of students' progress
- responsive and fast-developing provision of a wide range of courses
- sound market research leading to the development of new vocational areas and an expansion of full-time courses for 16-19 year olds
- student numbers which are growing rapidly while staffing costs are reduced
- good financial management
- above average results in vocational examinations

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- significant investment in new facilities for learning, including a well-equipped learning-resource centre and improved access for students with disabilities.

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

- improve retention rates
- encourage students to make more use of the support available
- improve results in GCSE and GCE A level examinations
- monitor student destinations more accurately
- develop further the systems for college strategic planning and performance review
- provide management training for middle managers and develop college-wide standards to ensure more consistent experience for students
- continue efforts to increase the proportion of students from groups not normally represented in further education
- draw up a replacement policy for large equipment in engineering.

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## FIGURES

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- 1 Percentage enrolments by age (1994-95)

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

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

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

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  - 5 Income (for 12 months to July 1994)

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  - 6 Expenditure (for 12 months to July 1994)

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

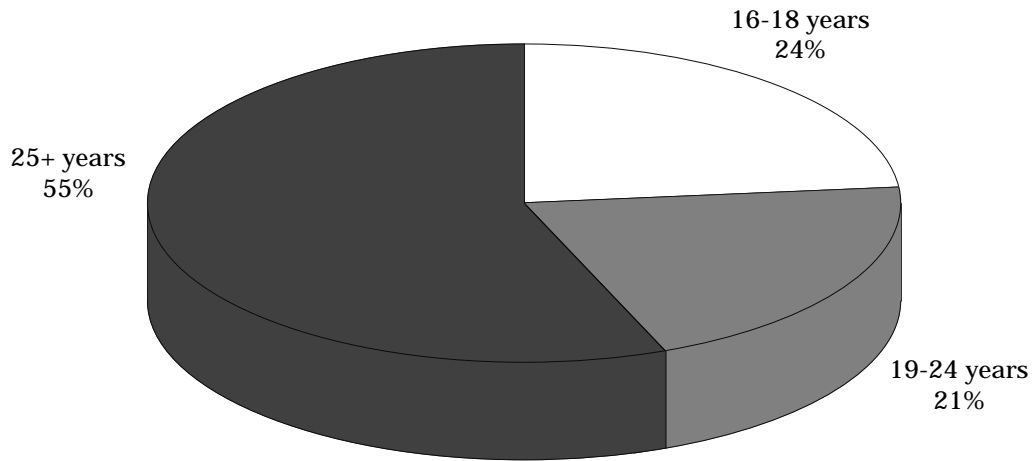
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**Figure 1**

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**Henley College: percentage enrolments by age (1994-95)**



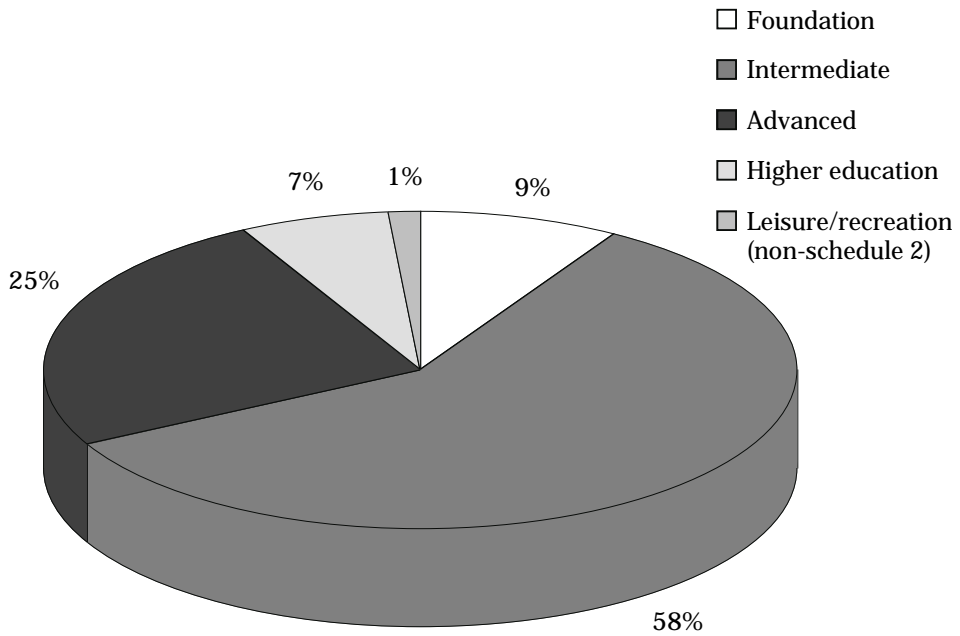
Enrolments: 6,207

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**Figure 2**

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**Henley College: percentage enrolments by level of study (1994-95)**

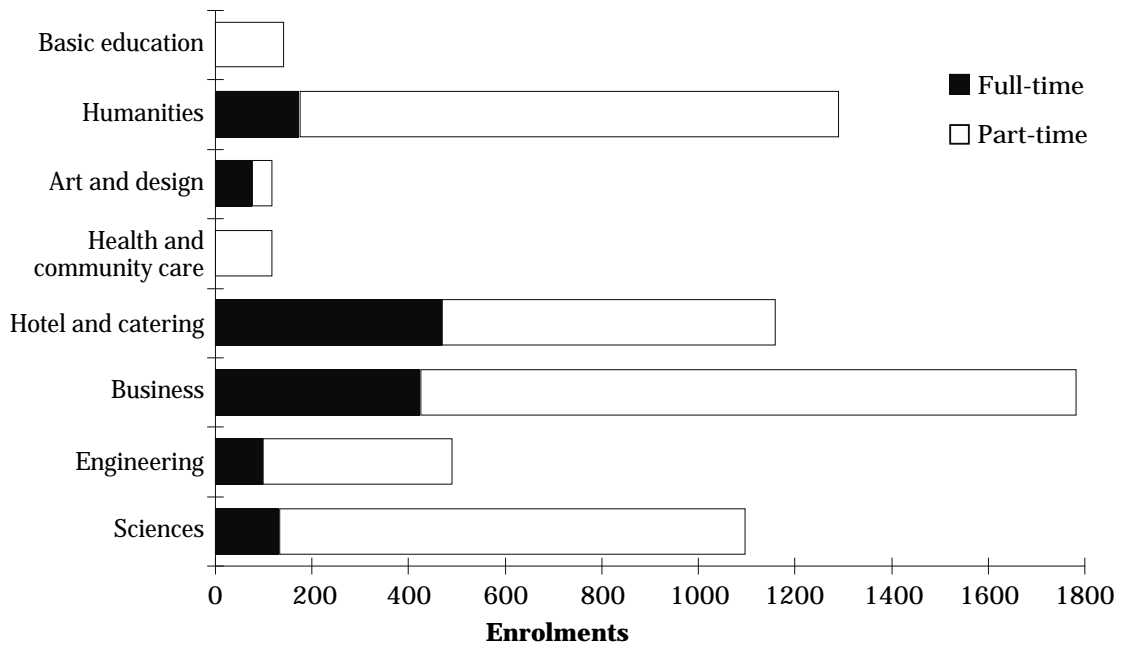


Enrolments: 6,207

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**Figure 3**

**Henley College: enrolments by mode of attendance and curriculum area (1994-95)**

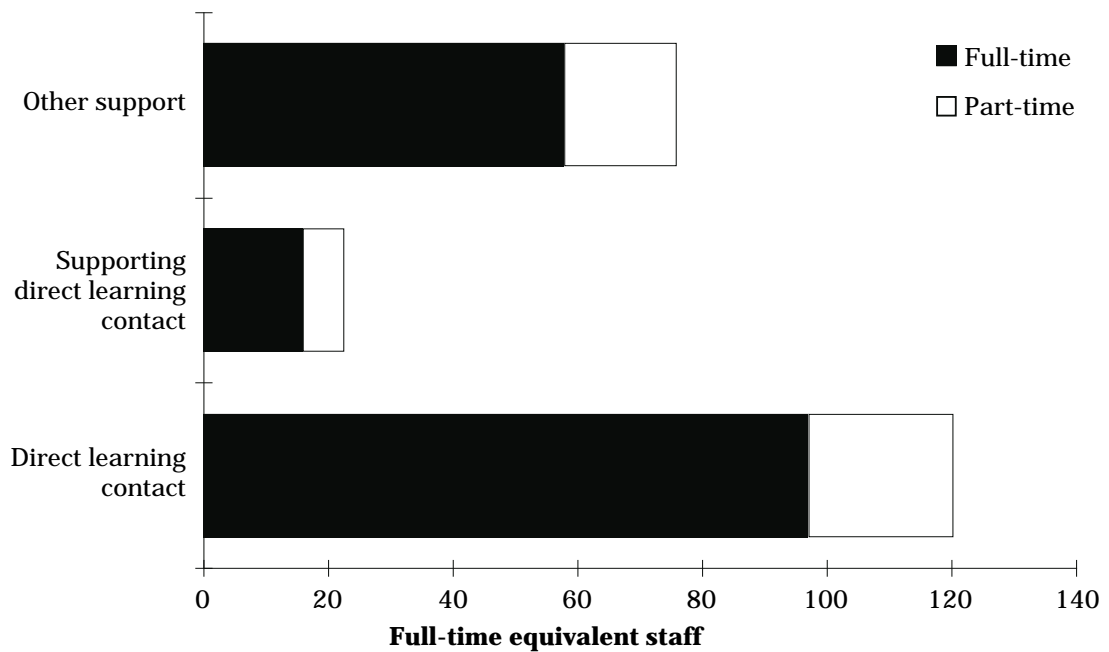


Enrolments: 6,207

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**Figure 4**

**Henley College: staff profile - staff expressed as full-time equivalents (1994-95)**



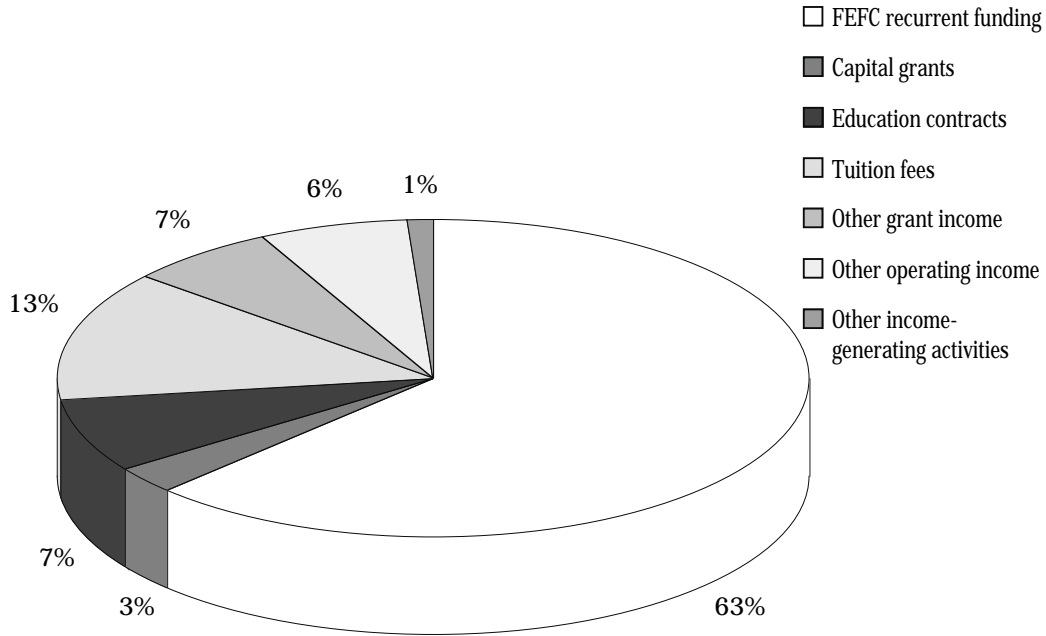
Full-time equivalent staff: 219



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**Figure 5**

**Henley College: income (for 12 months to July 1994)**

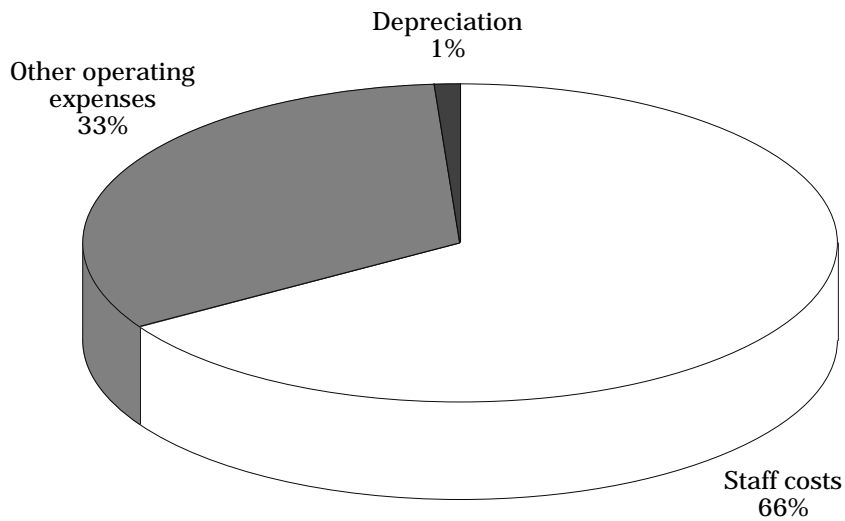


Income: £7,261,333

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**Figure 6**

**Henley College: expenditure (for 12 months to July 1994)**



Expenditure: £6,728,753

*Note: this chart excludes £23,776 interest payable.*

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