

**REPORT  
FROM THE  
INSPECTORATE**

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# **Lewes Tertiary College**

**May 1994**

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**THE  
FURTHER  
EDUCATION  
FUNDING  
COUNCIL**

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## **THE FURTHER EDUCATION FUNDING COUNCIL**

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

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

### **GRADE DESCRIPTORS**

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

- grade 1 – provision which has many strengths and very few weaknesses*
- grade 2 – provision in which the strengths clearly outweigh the weaknesses*
- grade 3 – provision with a balance of strengths and weaknesses*
- grade 4 – provision in which the weaknesses clearly outweigh the strengths*
- grade 5 – provision which has many weaknesses and very few strengths.*

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# FEFC INSPECTION REPORT 34/94

## LEWES TERTIARY COLLEGE

### SOUTH EASTERN REGION

Inspected September 1993 - February 1994

#### Summary

Lewes Tertiary College, East Sussex, is a well-managed college. Managers draw effectively on the expertise of the members of the corporation board. Communication between managers and staff is good. The college provides appropriate courses for school leavers and adults, including students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. It has strong links with local schools and with local community organisations. The college is introducing a new quality assurance system which all staff have been involved in developing. The college is well resourced. Staff are appropriately qualified and there is a good range of staff development activity. A staff appraisal system is being introduced. Students benefit from high standards of teaching and effective support and guidance. They achieve good results in external examinations. The college should continue to develop its information systems, strengthen its marketing activities, provide increased support to middle managers to assist them in setting objectives and measuring performance, conduct a more detailed analysis of student withdrawal rates, impose greater coherence on elements of the emerging quality assurance system, and involve students more fully in the process of developing and measuring standards.

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

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

Curriculum area	Grade	Curriculum area	Grade
Science and computing studies	2	Music	2
		Art and design, hairdressing and beauty	2
Engineering, technology and mathematics	2	English, communication, languages, English as a foreign language	3
		Humanities, social sciences, leisure and physical education	2
Social and health care	2	Special educational needs	3
		Access	2

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## **INTRODUCTION**

1 The inspection of Lewes Tertiary College, East Sussex, took place in three stages. The college's enrolment and induction procedures were inspected at the beginning of the autumn term 1993. Specialist subject areas were inspected mainly between 17 and 20 January 1994 when six full-time and seven part-time inspectors took part for a total of 44 days. They visited 191 classes, attended by 2,055 students, and examined a representative sample of students' work. Inspection of cross-college provision took place from 14 to 17 February 1994. Five full-time and two part-time inspectors took part for a total of 28 inspector days.

2 Discussions were held with members of the college corporation board, the senior management team, heads of programme areas, cross-college co-ordinators, course leaders, teaching and administrative staff, student support staff and students. Inspectors also attended meetings of the senior management team, the personnel subcommittee of the corporation board and the student council. Meetings took place with a representative of the local training and enterprise council (TEC), a group of employers and community representatives and parents of students currently attending the college. Policy statements, minutes of major committees and documents relating to internal systems were examined.

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

## **THE COLLEGE AND ITS AIMS**

4 Lewes Tertiary College is in East Sussex. The main site is on the outskirts of Lewes, conveniently situated for public transport. Two small annexes in Lewes itself and an old school building in Newhaven 10 miles away are used mainly for adult education. County council premises close to the town centre provide accommodation for music studies. There are day nurseries for the children of staff and students on the main site and at Newhaven.

5 At the time of the inspection the college had a full-time equivalent staff of 159 lecturers and 87 support staff (figure 1). On 1 November 1993, there were 1,426 full-time students and 1,398 students attending part-time day or evening courses. There were also substantial numbers of adults studying on community education programmes. Since its formation in 1989, the college has almost doubled in size. Further growth is anticipated with an increased demand for places from 16-19 year-old students. The college has met its student recruitment target, agreed with the FEFC, for 1993-94. Enrolments by age are shown in figure 2.

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6 The work of the college is organised in eight curriculum areas: business, management and office studies; science and computing studies; arts, hairdressing and beauty studies; engineering, technology and mathematics; English, communication, languages and English as a foreign language; humanities, leisure and physical education; social and health care and special educational needs; and adult, adult basic education and access. These are clustered in two sectors each headed by an assistant principal for curriculum.

7 Lewes, the county town of East Sussex, is a small, busy centre on the south-east side of the South Downs with a population of approximately 16,000. The population of Lewes district is 88,565. The district has an unemployment rate of 11.9 per cent which is high for the region. The college is close to the offices of the county council which is the major employer in the town. Employment is generally in small-scale industrial and commercial enterprises. A significant proportion of the working population commute daily to London, Brighton and other towns in the south east.

8 The number of students attending the college from the town of Lewes itself is small. Eighty per cent of students travel more than six miles to college. Many of them have alternative provision nearer to their homes. The college is one of several providers of post-16 education in the area from which it recruits students. Several sixth form colleges are within convenient travelling distance and there are two general further education colleges at Brighton and Eastbourne, six and 15 miles away, respectively. There are 30 secondary schools in the area which include three schools with which the college has a special partnership arrangement.

9 The declared mission of Lewes Tertiary College is to provide access to quality learning. It describes itself as a student-centred institution committed to provide the highest standards of teaching and support for all students and to develop itself as a dynamic, efficient, flexible and innovative organisation which puts learning at the centre of its corporate concern. Equality of opportunity is seen as central to increasing access, improving quality and achieving excellence.

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

10 The college offers a broad range of full-time courses. These include 41 General Certificate of Education advanced level and advanced supplementary (GCE A level and AS) subjects which can be studied over one or two years and 31 General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) subjects. Access to higher education courses for adults contain modules in social science, cultural studies, science and computer studies. There are full-time National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) in hairdressing and business administration, and pre-vocational courses both for 16-19 year-old students and adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Adult basic education is available both on a full-time and part-time basis.

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Business and Technology Education Councils (BTEC) courses are offered in nine vocational areas and GNVQ courses have been introduced in business and leisure and tourism. The percentages of full-time students pursuing different levels of study within the college are shown in figure 3; enrolments by curriculum area and mode of attendance in figure 4.

11 The college offers a reasonable range of elective studies, including sporting activities, which is open to all full-time students and some part-time students. Not all full-time students take advantage of this. The recording of enrolments and attendance on elective courses is too casual and students' perceptions of the value of them vary. For team sports, the college rents sports fields from the local authority and a nearby school. It also books daily time at the Lewes Leisure Centre, mainly for sports studies courses. The college hockey team has recently won the national tertiary and sixth form college hockey cup sponsored by Midland Bank and is progressing well in another important competition.

12 The part-time provision comprises 28 GCE A level and 19 GCSE subjects available during the day or evening, NVQs in three vocational areas and an evening access programme which also involves some weekend study. There are also courses in English for foreign students. Adult basic education is available at the main college site and in centres at Newhaven, Peacehaven and Seaford. Courses for adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are available at the main college site and the Newhaven centre. There is a small selection of short courses for business and industry.

13 Open learning is available in a broad range of GCSE, GCE A level subjects and some vocational courses. Full-time students have used the facility sensibly to compensate for missed classes or when changing courses. The current restriction on numbers for this mode of learning has prevented fuller take-up. The accreditation of prior learning is at an early stage of development.

14 The enrolment of adults in vocational areas is small given the numbers unemployed. The ALBSU predictions of adults' needs in the college's catchment area far exceed the number of students on the adult basic education programme. The college has not explored the reasons for this.

15 There are good links with local schools which enable the college to identify the need for particular subjects in their academic programmes. School pupils can attend classes to sample subjects before deciding on future courses. A memorandum of understanding has been prepared, listing the ways in which three feeder schools and the college can work in partnership. In addition, there is regular contact with 27 other schools in the district.

16 The college has close working relationships with social services, the careers service and voluntary organisations. There is also effective liaison with community organisations and the TEC. The strength of links with business and industry varies between the different vocational areas in the

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college. There are well-established arrangements with local employers to provide work experience placements.

17 Some development plans produced by programme area managers are expressed in inappropriately general terms. Target numbers are not based on market data because a systematic planning cycle based on market research is not yet in place. Too much reliance is placed on anecdotal sources of information about student demand. The college has recently appointed a new marketing manager and is beginning to address these shortcomings.

18 There is a preponderance of one nationality in the 'English plus' course for international students wishing to learn English. This results in an experience for the students that has much less of an international dimension than advertised. The college is planning to increase courses for students from overseas. Its plans need to address not only the likely sources of students and potential revenue but also the college's ability to cope with any increased numbers.

19 In comparison with 1992-93, the foreign language provision in vocational courses has shrunk. There is scope to increase this provision in order to encourage the 'Europeanisation' of the vocational curriculum. More active marketing is needed to address missed enrolment targets. The narrow range of advertising literature fails to address particular segments of the market for potential students.

20 The current prospectus does not adequately reflect the college's provision for students who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Audio-visual and other means of communicating effectively with potential students with learning or reading difficulties have not been exploited.

21 The local population includes few from ethnic minority backgrounds, although there is a more diverse community in the Brighton area from which some students are drawn. The proportion of students from ethnic minority backgrounds at the college is roughly the same as within the local population.

## **GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT**

22 The corporation board has 16 members. There are eight independent members including one TEC nominee, a professor of education who is the chairperson, four co-opted members, two staff members, one student member and the principal. At the time of the inspection, the board had three vacancies. Finance and general purposes, personnel, remuneration and audit subcommittees are established and working.

23 The college is well governed and well managed. Corporation board members are strongly supportive of the college's senior managers and the open management ethos. Members recognise their legal responsibilities and the board has appropriate procedures in place for monitoring the college's performance. These include regular, comprehensive reports from the senior management team.



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24 Staff and other resources are deployed effectively. Management structures, and managers' roles and responsibilities within these structures are clear and understood. Senior managers are keen to develop tighter accountability and to co-ordinate individual initiatives whilst encouraging innovation. Responsibilities for equal opportunities, health and safety, student support and the college estate are clearly allocated. Communication between staff and managers is good.

25 Governors are appropriately involved in discussing and agreeing the strategic plan. Staff are consulted about and involved in the strategic planning process. The strategic plan does not differentiate between short, medium and longer term priorities, and programme area managers, only recently engaged in devising operational plans for their areas, would benefit if senior managers identified annual priorities more clearly. More guidance is also required to ensure rigour in setting objectives for individuals and programme areas and in measuring performance against them.

26 Curriculum programme managers are hard pressed to fulfil their responsibilities given their current teaching loads. The situation will be exacerbated as the process for devolving the full budget is completed over the next two years. It should be kept under review by senior managers. New procedures for producing monthly accounting reports should bring much-needed help to programme managers in managing their budgets.

27 The current procedure for allocating budgets is well recognised. Budgets for goods and services, minor capital and part-time teaching are devolved to programme managers who further delegate some of them to course co-ordinators. The college has made advances in developing unit costing and is using this method to inform its new budget allocation process. Plans are in hand to carry unit costing further and to link it to the introduction of zero-based budgeting.

28 The Further Education Management Information System is used for student records, admissions and examinations. Other management information systems provide additional data. The college system for monitoring and measuring completion rates against student enrolments is slow and insufficiently rigorous. It does not provide information in time to inform decision-making and is unlikely to do so in advance of a new computer-based registration system which is being planned. Student retention rates are sometimes low although in most areas staff are able to provide reasons for withdrawals. The college is planning to co-ordinate and extend student record systems in order to produce more coherent information.

29 College enrolment targets are set and achieved. However, the performance of individual programmes and subjects is varied. Some are as much as 160 per cent over target and others 70 per cent below. This range suggests that a more effective means of considering and setting growth targets is required.

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

30 Guidance and support for students are good. A framework has been established to support students at all stages of their contact with the college, from pre-entry through to exit. It is well understood by staff. There is substantial commitment to the pastoral system and tutors are well supported in their work.

31 Applicants from the partner schools have an initial interview to explore the firmness of their ambitions. Two subsequent interviews are held to identify courses which meet their aims. Additional interviews are available after students hear their examination results. These are highly valued, particularly by parents. Students from other schools receive equally effective pre-entry guidance although this begins at a later stage than for the partner schools. The college should keep under review the effectiveness and cost of the large number of interviews.

32 Open days and careers events are effective in providing information about the college and its provision. Course documentation is of high quality with the exception of some of the material prepared for overseas students, the language of which is too complex. More could be done to communicate with potential students who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

33 Students' applications are tracked carefully throughout the admission process. The college is planning to set up arrangements for following up students who apply but do not enrol. In the areas of science, computing, performing arts, business studies, hairdressing, engineering and leisure and tourism little attempt is being made to modify the gender imbalances which are traditional on such courses. During enrolment, the practice of using red and green channels to separate 'problems and queries' from 'no problems and no queries' is well received and helps to keep the process moving. Some parts of the process are slow because they are not yet computerised. Other parts of it could be speeded up if some form-filling were undertaken before students attend for enrolment. Overall, the college succeeds in creating a welcoming and caring ambience.

34 Full-time students follow a well-planned induction programme which is supported by appropriate information for both tutors and students. Students find that the induction programme helps them to settle quickly into their new surroundings and studies. They are informed clearly of their rights and responsibilities and sign an agreement with the college which embodies these.

35 The monitoring of essential-skills workshops is not sufficiently rigorous to enable the college to gauge the effectiveness of literacy and numeracy work in improving student performance. Greater co-ordination between lecturers and workshop staff is required to track the attendance at the workshops of students who need support. The college has conducted a diagnostic exercise with sample groups of students. This has been effective in identifying formerly unknown needs and there are plans to extend it. If the demand for learning support increases, improved

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monitoring of the workshops and extra support in students' day-to-day curricula will both be required to ensure that needs are met. Low retention rates in some subjects suggest the need for a fuller diagnostic or screening process and more determined evaluation of the reasons for withdrawals.

36 A well-structured tutorial system supports all full-time students. Some tutor groups are too large. Action planning, which involves students in planning their own learning and monitoring their own progress, and records of achievement, are being introduced as part of the system. Effective arrangements are made for part-time students to attend tutorials during twilight hours. Weekly drop-in sessions are available for students wanting to change courses. This facility is used widely by GCE A level students, peak periods occurring in the early autumn and late summer terms. Good advice and guidance is available to students studying by open learning, although support at the Newhaven site is limited.

37 The recruitment, guidance and support systems are monitored regularly. Feedback is obtained from parents, students and staff. Students are in danger of being overloaded with questionnaires and the response rate to these is low. The college should consider how best to co-ordinate its various forms of consultation and increase the level of response to questionnaires.

38 The counselling service is well regarded and well used. Demand sometimes exceeds the time counselling staff, who are all part-time, have available. The various times at which individual counsellors are available on the site make it difficult to arrive at an assessment of the adequacy of resources and the extent to which the service assists the college in achieving its aims and objectives. Counselling and careers services are located in the student services suite. Better sign-posting would help students to find their way to the facilities they require.

39 A careers officer from the local authority is based at the college. Careers guidance is good and is supported by a well-resourced careers centre. The guidance offered to students on their progression to other further education courses and to higher education is particularly strong and the service is used extensively. Occupational guidance is also of good quality but not used greatly. Plans are in hand to ensure that the careers service's operational plans, devised with the local authority, are consonant with those of the college.

40 Students have an additional source of support in the students' union. The union is given appropriate recognition by having a representative on all major committees including the corporation board. Communication between the students' union and senior management is good. It has been strengthened by the recent appointment of a student liaison officer and an activities officer. The students' union has been effective in enhancing students' experiences. For example, having identified the need, it has provided money to buy equipment so that students can now participate in a new music elective.

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41 There is a nursery but its opening hours are not suitable for some mature students. The system of paying by session rather than hours requires double payment for those whose restricted day straddles lunchtime. This discriminates unfairly against some part-time students.

### **TEACHING AND THE PROMOTION OF LEARNING**

42 Of the 191 sessions inspected, 63 per cent had strengths which clearly outweighed the weaknesses. A summary of the inspection grades is given in the table below.

#### **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 A/AS level		6	40	25	0	0	71
GCSE		0	6	6	1	0	13
GNVQ		0	11	6	0	0	17
BTEC		3	11	2	1	0	17
Other		6	37	25	5	0	73
Total		15	105	64	7	0	191

43 The relationship between lecturers and students is good. Most sessions are conducted in an atmosphere combining rigour and good humour. The aims and objectives of sessions are appropriately specified in schemes of work and communicated clearly to students. Most lessons are well planned and well organised. Teachers employ a variety of teaching methods and make good use of teaching aids.

44 In most lessons, previous learning is consolidated and forms the basis for the introduction or development of topics. Students received sound advice on how to follow up topics in their personal study time. Seminar, practical, small-group and other collaborative work was observed in many sessions. In the majority of cases students worked enthusiastically in both classrooms and workshops.

45 Particularly good practice was observed in the areas of science, business studies and music. In a science class, a practical assignment was designed to meet the requirements both of GCE A level and GNVQ assessment. The assignment offered students the opportunity to gain a GNVQ advanced level vocational science module in addition to a GCE A level practical assessment. It therefore helped students to gain an understanding of the application of science and to develop industrial laboratory techniques. In another science session, students were engaged enthusiastically in researching and preparing for oral presentations on aspects of a particular topic.

46 A part-time business studies lesson was particularly well planned and well paced. Accounting techniques were introduced incrementally. Progress during the lesson was constantly reviewed, taking good account

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of feedback from students. This approach clearly reinforced and developed students' confidence in using accounting procedures.

47 In an evening music class, enthusiastic attention was held throughout a long well-planned session. Music scores had been carefully selected. Highly skilful demonstration and explanation by staff throughout the lesson enabled students to note readily the way in which the composer had used specialised techniques. Students were able quickly to discuss issues and to experiment with other ways in which the composer might have achieved similar or contrasting effects. The pace of the session was lively and considerable ground was covered in detail. Students' understanding and confidence were developed effectively.

48 Occasionally, facts were presented without teachers checking whether students had understood them. Handouts and class materials in a few areas were out of date. More use could have been made of information technology in some sessions. The pace of work in some classes was too slow and did not sufficiently extend students' understanding of concepts and ideas. There was sometimes little coherence and continuity in the presentation of topics. In these cases, students did not have the opportunity to recapitulate on previous work before moving on to new learning. Some topics were dealt with in the abstract where a practical approach would have been more effective in holding students' attention and improving their understanding.

49 The hairdressing, business studies, leisure and tourism and health and social care areas have established effective work experience programmes with local employers. Limited opportunity exists for such links locally in engineering, but effective contact has been established with employers further afield. The music preparatory course, franchised to East Sussex County School of Music, provides valuable opportunities for public performance. All these activities contribute to the variety, quality and relevance of students' learning. Students studying foreign languages have an opportunity to visit firms for work-shadowing or observation but there is no provision to enable students to work abroad.

50 Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are integrated well into the mainstream courses of the college. Examples of this were observed in hairdressing, business studies, music and access courses. Appropriate support is provided in subject classes as well as in discrete specialist sessions. However, some discrete pre-vocational courses for students with learning difficulties should be redesigned to address the skills needed for employment. There is a lack of opportunity for students with learning difficulties to pursue accredited courses.

51 In courses for overseas students, strategies are under-developed for ensuring that students can transfer the skills developed in English language sessions to the rest of their programmes. In some subjects, there is scope to develop students' skills of analysis, writing and graphical representation of data. In the programme areas of art and design, media and photography, social sciences, business and management, engineering, technology and

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maths, students' punctuality, and sometimes their levels of attendance, were poor.

### **STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENTS**

52 Most students interviewed during the inspection said that they were enjoying their studies. They were able to talk about their work knowledgeably and enthusiastically. Students demonstrate appropriate levels of specialist and technical competence in their practical work, which is conducted with due regard to health and safety. High levels of technical ability were seen, particularly in hairdressing.

53 Students' work is generally of a good standard and appropriate to the requirements of their courses. In most areas, staff work to a schedule for setting, marking and returning students' work which allows students to benefit from timely feedback before embarking on further work. Students' work is marked thoroughly and attention is paid to spelling and grammar. In most cases, teachers make helpful and encouraging written comments. In some areas of work staff are slow in returning marked assignments to students. Recording of students' assessments is generally well organised. However, at least one course, the 'English plus' course, had no written records of students' progress.

54 Students are able to develop appropriate study, numerical and literacy skills through tutorials and essential-skills workshops. The college has a policy of open access to information technology for all students. In practice, priority has to be given to students on courses where information technology or computing is an examined element.

55 There are high student drop-out rates in some GCSE and GCE A level groups. The trend is rising, particularly in GCSE German, law and mathematics. Among GCE A level groups, there is cause for particular concern in communication studies, computing, biology, psychology and sociology where withdrawal rates range from 40 per cent to 60 per cent. There were more withdrawals overall from the college in 1993 than in 1992.

56 Examination results are generally good. In 1992, 654 students entered GCSE examinations. The average success rate for students achieving grades A-C was 55.6 per cent. All students entered for English literature, French and photography achieved grades A-C. There were poorer pass rates of between 20 per cent and 38 per cent in biology, computer studies, human biology, Italian, mathematics and history. In 1993, 66 per cent of the 661 students entered for GCSE examinations achieved grades A-C, which is well above the national average for the further education sector of 50 per cent (source: Department for Education statistics). Particularly good results were achieved in English language, English literature, French, Italian and photography with 80 per cent or more students achieving grades A-C, substantially above the national averages for these subjects. Small groups of students taking Chinese,

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German and music all achieved A-C grades. There were less satisfactory pass rates of 30 per cent or below in history, as in the previous year, and in home economics, physical education, travel and tourism and information technology.

57 In 1992, 81.7 per cent of the 1,004 students entered for GCE A level examinations achieved grades A-E. Of these, 431 took A levels in one year and 573 in two years. In 1993, 975 students entered, 418 taking A levels in one year and 557 in two years. They achieved a 79.8 per cent pass rate, grades A-E.

58 In 1992, the 431 one-year students entered for GCE A level examinations achieved a pass rate of 80.7 per cent. History and chemistry results were particularly good with all students passing. Less satisfactory results were achieved in music (50 per cent) and theatre studies (45 per cent). In 1993, the pass rate for the 418 one-year students was lower at 73.4 per cent. However, achievements were good in environmental science, French, geology, physics and Spanish where pass rates were between 90 and 100 per cent, well above the national averages for these subjects. Fewer than 50 per cent of the students were successful in music theory and theatre studies for a second year, and in chemistry, pure maths and sociology.

59 In 1992, 82.5 per cent of the 573 two-year GCE A level students achieved grades A-E. In 1993, the 557 two-year students achieved an 84.7 per cent pass rate which included pass rates of 90 per cent or higher in 16 out of 37 subjects. Pass rates in art history, pure maths, philosophy and sociology of between 17 per cent and 50 per cent were lower than in 1992 and all well below national averages.

60 Based on figures published by the Department for Education, 16 to 18 year old students at the college who passed two or more GCE A levels in 1993 scored an average of 10.9 points (where A = 10 points, E = 2 points) compared with an average for England of 14.7 points. However, the calculation includes students who withdrew from the college after 1 April 1993 and absentees on examination days. The average pass rates, grades A-E, of students entered for GCE A level examinations in 1992 and 1993 compare favourably with the national averages for further education sector colleges (66 per cent in 1992 and 1993). The college's average success rates are similar to the national averages for sixth form colleges which were 79 per cent in 1992 and 80 per cent in 1993 (source: Department for Education statistics).

61 BTEC vocational examination results overall are good. In 1993, 191 students pursued BTEC qualifications. All students passed the first diploma in care, the national diplomas in nursery nursing and science and the national certificates in public administration and business and finance. In 1992, all students achieved their qualifications on the first diplomas in business studies, care and engineering. Fifty per cent of the students pursuing the BTEC national diploma in general engineering passed in 1992 and this improved to 75 per cent in 1993. There was a similar

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improvement in the national diploma in business and finance which rose from 62 per cent in 1992 to 91 per cent in 1993.

62 Figures produced by the Department for Education indicate that 90 per cent of the 191 students who pursued BTEC or City and Guilds of London Institute national diplomas or certificates achieved their qualifications compared with the average for England of 80.5 per cent. This performance places the college in the top 30 per cent of colleges within the further education sector.

63 The college has good data on full-time student destinations for 1993, which have been achieved in close co-operation with the careers service. From completed returns, approximately 9 per cent of full-time students studying on GCE A level, BTEC national diploma and equivalent courses became unemployed; 15 per cent gained employment and 42 per cent progressed to higher education. There were good rates of progression to higher education in music (90 per cent) and engineering (88 per cent). Eighty-five per cent of access students went on to higher education, the majority studying arts subjects. Of the full-time students on GCSE, intermediate and foundation level courses, approximately 58 per cent progressed to other further education studies. Levels of unemployment varied between courses and subjects. Overall, approximately 11 per cent were unemployed. Approximately 20 per cent of students entered employment, the proportion varying from course to course.

#### **QUALITY ASSURANCE**

64 The college is developing a new quality assurance system. A policy has been produced which has the full commitment of the senior management team. Staff have been widely involved in discussion and in planning and devising draft standards. A quality assurance subcommittee of the academic board has been set up and a quality assurance manager is in post. The college is in the first year of implementing its new system.

65 A number of promising developments are under way, including the introduction this year of standardised quality assurance files for all courses. The college has begun its internal verification process for some courses by analysing and moderating assessments of student work in preparation for the assessment and verification by awarding bodies. There is an emerging mechanism for analysing centrally the examination results of sample courses. Performance indicators and value-added analysis of examination results, which involves measuring students' performance by comparing their entry qualifications with their final examination results, are just beginning to be used.

66 Existing practices in monitoring quality are being retained and are generally effective. Course teams are responsible for monitoring, evaluating and reviewing full-time and part-time courses. Procedures contained in new, standardised quality assurance files are the main mechanism for this. The quality of the files is uneven. Some are very good



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and indicate that staff bring appropriate thoroughness both to course review and documenting outcomes. Others are incomplete, contain extraneous material or are poorly organised. Some demonstrate an over-emphasis on day-to-day operational issues. Trends suggested by data are not systematically identified and analysed by all teams. Course review procedures do not yet include the setting of effective, numerical improvement targets for student retention or achievements.

67 Students are not generally included in team meetings and need more encouragement from staff to attend. Although there is a college agreement with students, the students remain unclear about how to voice grievances. The college's tutorial system has been used by students to make comments and requests. Students' opinions have sometimes led to the college reviewing and changing provision but in other instances, they have heard nothing further about the issues they have raised.

68 All staff have been involved in drafting standards for a variety of aspects of college work. There has been no parallel introduction for students who are unaware of the many standards being produced, the development of the new approach, its underlying principles or its operating structure. As customers they need to be involved in devising standards and the measures to be used and should play a part in assessing the degree to which the college meets its standards.

69 Generally, the quality standards and associated measures which are proposed, whilst a promising starting point, are insufficiently precise. There is considerable scope for them to be honed to provide specific, measurable requirements against which performance can effectively be gauged and the results used as a basis for improvement targets.

70 Course evaluation and review are not mentioned in the curriculum quality standards. There are no standards for course evaluation and review. Performance indicators are not mentioned in the quality assurance files. There is no cross-reference between performance indicators and the emerging standards. These initiatives remain disparate and the need for and importance of coherence are not generally understood.

71 Students interviewed were unaware of the terms of the Charter for Further Education. Senior staff are aware of its requirements. The college operates a learning agreement with students and it plans to develop this in line with the Charter for Further Education to produce a college charter.

72 The college has a well-established staff-development policy and strategy. Staff-development needs and requests are considered against the requirements of the strategic plan. The college is pursuing the Investors in People award. Induction of new staff is well organised and includes mentoring. The mentor system is effective for most newcomers. Although guidelines exist, practice is not yet fully standardised. New teachers appointed to the college who have not acquired a teaching qualification attend a first year in-house training course. They continue their studies at another college to obtain a certificate of education. There is a good range of staff-development activity at all levels in the college.

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73 The staff-development programme is being linked to the new appraisal system. The documentation for the appraisal system is clear and comprehensive. Appraisal of the senior management team and middle managers is established. The college is in the first year of appraisal of other staff. Training for appraisers and appraisees is under way. Appraisal will take place every two years but observation of teaching will not be included until the second round of appraisals in 1996.

## **RESOURCES**

### **Staffing**

74 Support and teaching staff have appropriate qualifications to fulfil their responsibilities. Seventy-eight per cent of full-time lecturers are graduates and most have a teaching qualification. Forty-three per cent have higher degrees. There is a good balance of men and women among the lecturing staff. There is a good range of full and part-time professional, technical and clerical staff.

75 The college has a policy that 70 per cent of teaching hours are delivered by full-time lecturers. This has been achieved across the college and exceeded in some areas. In health and social care, staffing is equally divided between full-time and part-time teachers which places too high an administrative burden on full-time lecturers.

76 Part-time teachers on a few vocational courses do not have experience of applying their specialisms in a business or commercial environment. Such requirements of part-time staff should influence their selection. The use of part-time staff for co-ordinating some full-time provision means that the day-to-day co-ordination of work in these areas is precarious. Some full-time staff are inappropriately deployed on administrative activities. There is limited recent business or industrial experience among full-time staff across the vocational areas.

### **Equipment**

77 There is a good range of basic teaching equipment in the college. An overhead projector is available in each room but not necessarily a retractable screen. In these cases, white boards are used for projection which often cause glare. In some rooms in the out-buildings, white boards need to be replaced. In others, such as those used for art, blackout facilities are inadequate. A good range of TV, video, slide projection and cassette recording equipment is available for general use. There is a small TV studio with three cameras which provides good facilities for media and other courses. A small but effective editing suite enables students to produce good-quality work.

78 In engineering, there is a good range of electronic and mechanical engineering equipment to support the courses offered. This includes computer facilities with appropriate software, a workshop with CNC milling machines and lathes of a good standard. The computer-aided design software needs to be replaced.

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79 The hairdressing studio contains equipment which is up to the best standards of industry. There is a good range of equipment to support science and music courses. In the area of art and design portable image projection facilities are inadequate and slide and tape collections are of unsatisfactory quality. There are insufficient photographic enlargers and they are unreliable. A good range of cookery equipment is available for life skills courses.

80 The college is well equipped with computers. There are 170 computers, of which 153 are personal computers. This results in a satisfactory ratio of one machine for every 11 students. The college plans to replace computers which are not up to the specifications of its more recent acquisitions. Most of the college's computers are located in a suite of rooms. The accommodation includes an open-access centre with only 28 machines, which is too small to satisfy needs. The introduction of GNVQ courses will entail a significant increase in the demand for computing and this, together with the insufficient number of machines on open access to students, needs to be addressed.

81 The library provides an attractive working environment. There are 70 seats and carrels which are adequate for most occasions. The library opening hours of 09.00 to 19.00 from Monday to Thursday and 09.00 to 17.00 on Friday limit the use of the library by evening students. The number of books, at approximately 17,000 volumes or 10 volumes per full-time equivalent student, is low. The library subscribes to a good range of periodicals. Lecturers are encouraged to suggest new titles and indicate those to be withdrawn from the shelves. Some curriculum areas pay insufficient attention to this task.

82 The librarian has limited formal links with curriculum leaders and is not involved in curriculum planning. Closer links between the librarian and course leaders would assist in the development of resources. The librarian is not aware of the schedules for students' assignments or projects.

### **Accommodation**

83 Generally, the college provides a good environment for students. Most of the accommodation on the main site was built in the early post-war years but some building was undertaken during 1991 and 1992. The main building is good but the out-buildings and off-site centres are of variable standard, ranging from satisfactory to poor. The purchase of a nearby school building will provide extra accommodation and give an opportunity to rationalise the poor quality temporary buildings currently being used on the main site. The college has an outline accommodation strategy and is reviewing its current use of accommodation together with a room utilisation study.

84 The buildings on the main site are generally well maintained. They are regularly cleaned and in most instances are in good decorative order. Poor heating control in some parts of buildings results in room

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temperatures that are either too high or too low. Work resulting from the Hunter survey is being undertaken. Some general repairs are being carried out by college maintenance staff.

85 The design of some of the rooms in the new building on the main site is inflexible. Rooms used for seminars and tutorials in some areas are too small. There is good access to most parts of the main college for students with restricted mobility. Staffrooms are cramped. They are often not conducive to preparing lesson notes or marking students' work because of movement and noise. Programme area managers share offices. Many of these are also hubs of activity and present similar problems for planning and working.

86 Two small annexes in Lewes and an old school building in Newhaven are used mainly for adult education. The two buildings in Lewes are attractive, but as old chapels they are unsatisfactory for teaching purposes because of the large size and inappropriate design of the rooms. GCE A level music is provided in premises close to the town centre. The thick walls provide natural sound proofing for music tuition. The building is in reasonable condition but overstretched. It is unsuitable for students with restricted mobility. Music students would be better integrated into the life of the college if this provision were included on the main site.

87 Two common rooms, one smoking and the other non-smoking, provide limited recreational accommodation for students. These, the entrance area and the refectory provide the only space for students between classes and during breaks. A further room is available for students to book; for example, for quiet work or religious meetings.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND ISSUES**

88 The college is progressing well towards meeting its mission to provide student-centred, flexible, quality education in a supportive and innovative environment. Particular strengths of the provision inspected are:

- effective governance
- open and responsive management
- good internal communication
- good links with local schools
- effective classroom teaching in most areas
- well-developed pastoral care and guidance for students
- commitment to students with learning difficulties or disabilities
- good examination results in many subjects
- a well-focused staff development programme
- a welcoming and supportive environment conducive to effective learning.

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89 If it is to raise standards already achieved by its students and if it is to meet more fully the needs of the local community, the college needs to address or expedite:

- the development of a marketing strategy focused on clear targets
- the collection and analysis of market research data
- the development of a computerised database which can provide coherent information
- increased support and guidance for middle managers
- the analysis of withdrawal rates
- the bringing together of the various elements of quality assurance
- the involvement of students in developing and measuring standards
- the development of the elective programme.

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## FIGURES

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- 1 Staff profile – staff expressed as full-time equivalents (at January 1994)

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  - 2 Percentage enrolments by age (at November 1993)

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  - 3 Percentage enrolments by level of study (at 1 November 1993)

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  - 4 Enrolments by mode of attendance and curriculum area (at 1 November 1993)

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  - 5 Recurrent income (for 16 months to July 1994)

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  - 6 Estimated expenditure (for 16 months to July 1994)

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

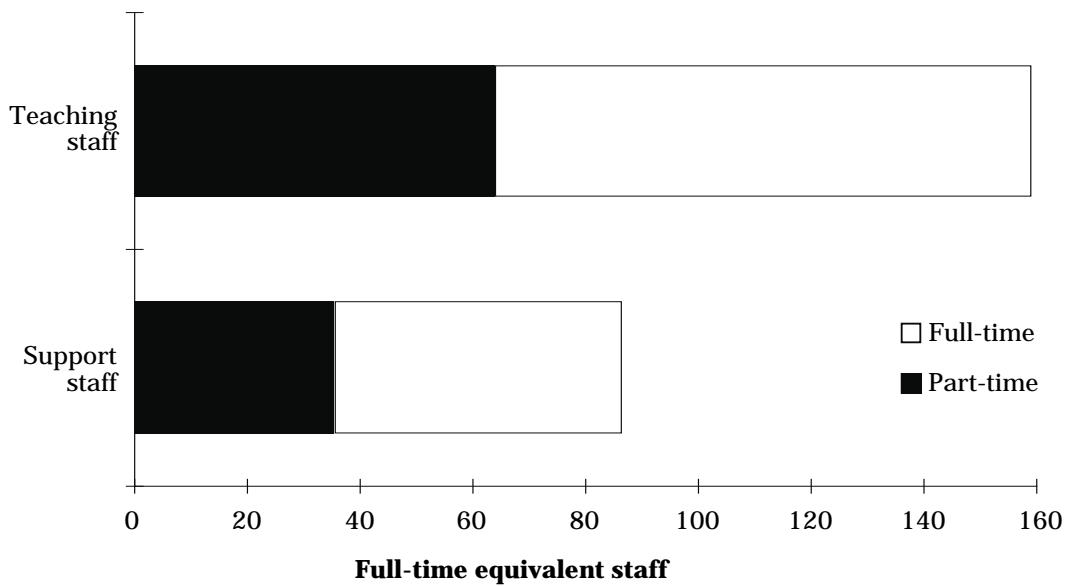
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**Figure 1**

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**Lewes Tertiary College: staff profile – staff expressed as full-time equivalents (at 31 January 1994)**



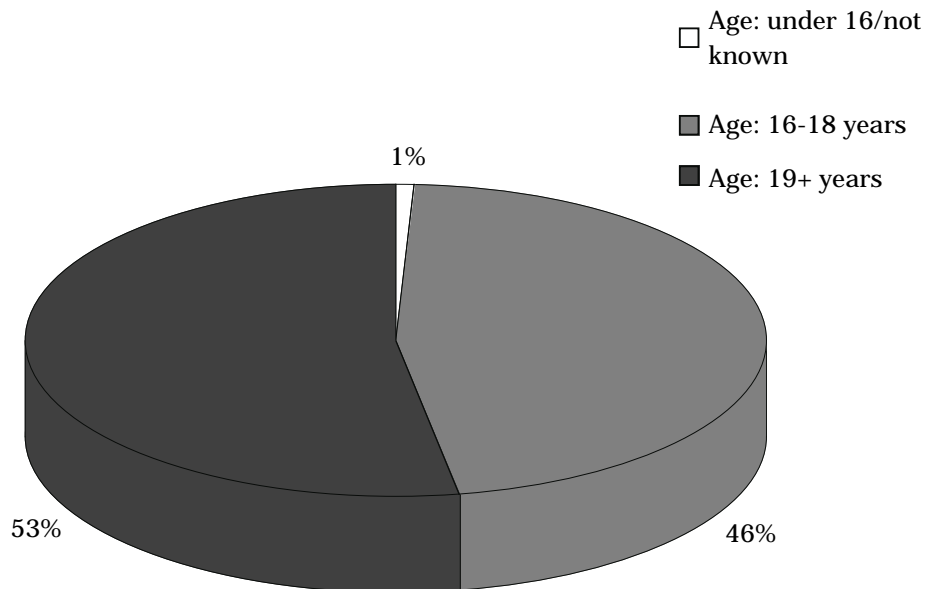
Full-time equivalent staff: 246

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**Figure 2**

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**Lewes Tertiary College: percentage enrolments by age (at 1 November 1993)**



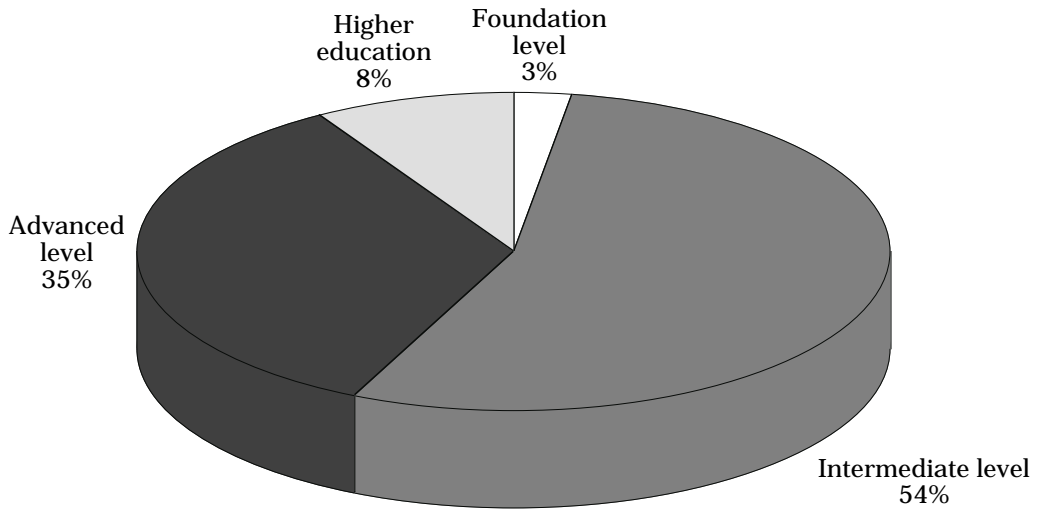
Enrolments: 2,824

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**Figure 3**

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**Lewes Tertiary College: percentage enrolments by level of study  
(at 1 November 1993)**



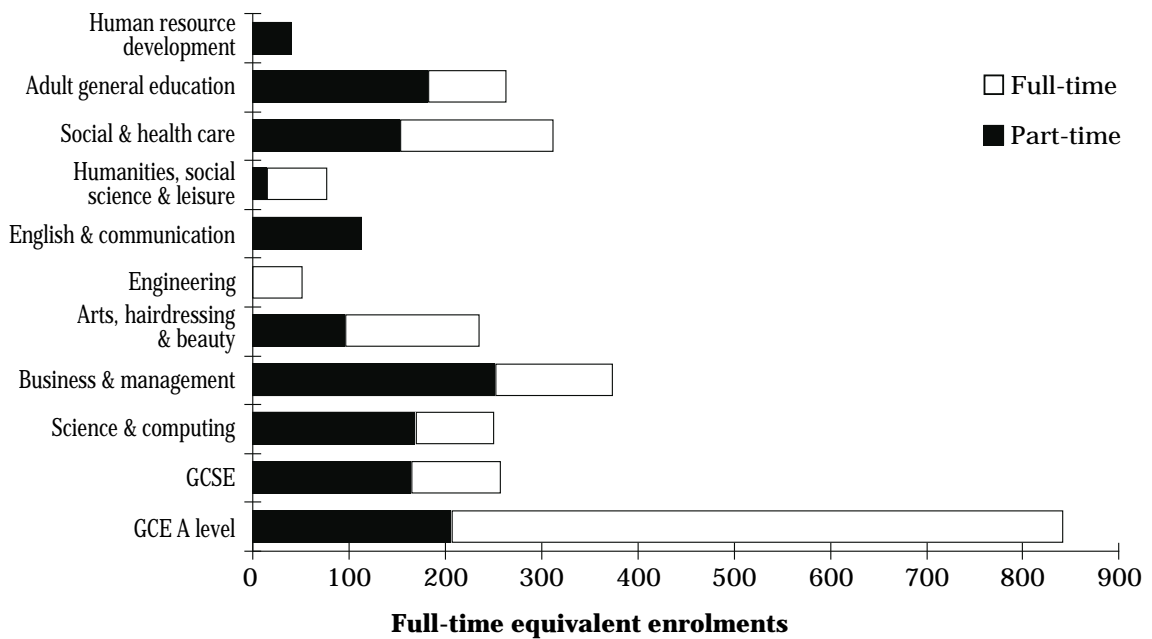
Enrolments: 2,824

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**Figure 4**

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**Lewes Tertiary College: enrolments by mode of attendance and curriculum area  
(at 1 November 1993)**



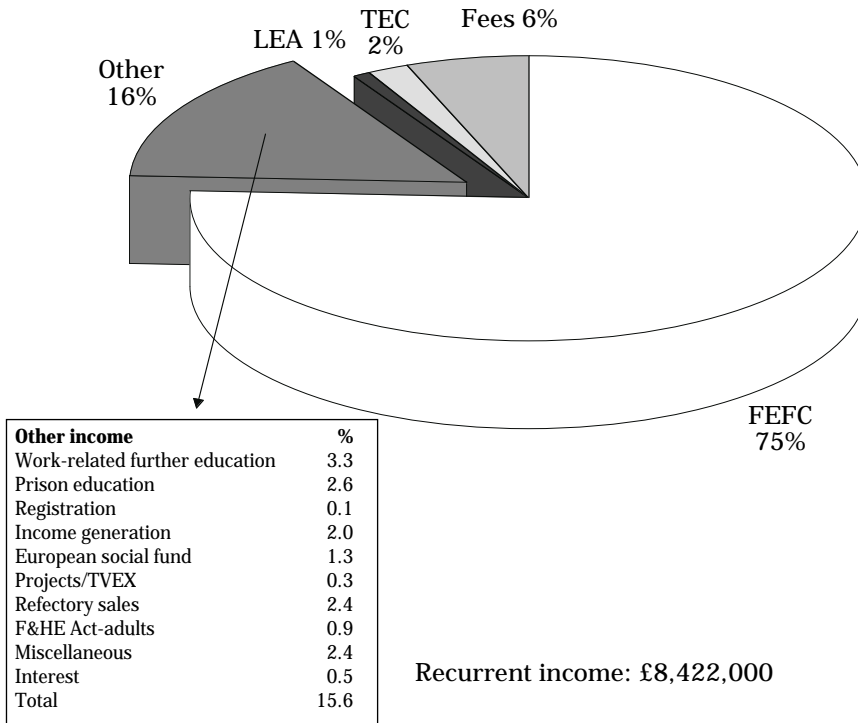
Enrolments: 2,824

**Note:** enrolments for GCE A level, GCSE and human resource development are presented separately from enrolments in the eight curriculum areas.



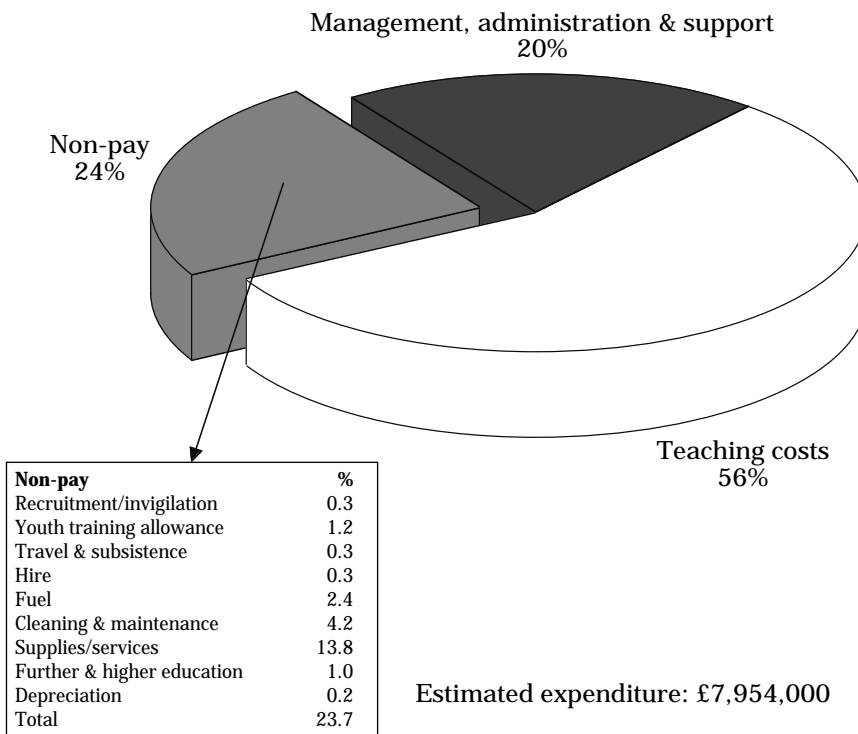
**Figure 5**

**Lewes Tertiary College: recurrent income (for 16 months to July 1994)**



**Figure 6**

**Lewes Tertiary College: estimated expenditure (for 16 months to July 1994)**



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