

**REPORT
FROM THE
INSPECTORATE**

New College Telford

July 1994

**THE
FURTHER
EDUCATION
FUNDING
COUNCIL**

THE FURTHER EDUCATION FUNDING COUNCIL

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

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

GRADE DESCRIPTORS

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

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

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FEFC INSPECTION REPORT 51/94

NEW COLLEGE, TELFORD

WEST MIDLANDS REGION

Inspected September 1993 - March 1994

Summary

New College Telford, a sixth form college, is a major provider of 16-19 education in east Shropshire. It offers a wide range of GCE A level and GCSE subjects together with some vocational and foundation provision. The college is held in high regard by the local community and there are strong links with partner schools. Governance and management are effective and there are good channels of communication between managers, staff and students. The college provides comprehensive and well-integrated systems of guidance and support. Students also benefit from an extensive enrichment programme. Much of the teaching is of a high standard and students achieve good examination results. The college has well-established quality improvement procedures and makes wide use of performance indicators. A comprehensive staff appraisal system has been in operation for several years. The college should undertake more systematic market analysis, further develop its management information systems, assist departments in costing their work, and examine its relatively high unit costs and low student-staff ratios.

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

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

Curriculum area	Grade	Curriculum area	Grade
Mathematics	2	Sociology and politics	2
Biology	2	English	2
Chemistry	2	History	1
Physics	2	Modern foreign languages	3
Computing	2		
Art	2		
Design	2		
Music	1		

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INTRODUCTION

1 The inspection of New College, Telford, Shropshire, took place in three stages during the autumn term 1993 and the spring term 1994. The college's enrolment and induction procedures were inspected at the beginning of the autumn term; specialist subject areas during the periods 18-19 November 1993, 21-22 February 1994 and 3-4 March 1994; and aspects of cross-college provision from 21 to 24 March 1994. In all, 10 inspectors spent a total of 44 inspector days in the college. They visited 96 classes, observed a parents' evening, scrutinised representative samples of students' work, and held discussions with governors, staff, students, local employers, representatives of the community, the partner schools and parents.

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

THE COLLEGE AND ITS AIMS

3 The college was established in 1975 as an open-access sixth form college to provide general education post-16 for Telford and the surrounding area. It is situated on a single site which has been extensively developed to provide specialist facilities for music, drama, sciences, design, computing and information technology.

4 At the time of the inspection, there were 828 students enrolled on full-time courses, of whom 83 per cent were following General Certificate of Education advanced level (GCE A level) or General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) courses. Percentage enrolments by age and level of study are shown in figures 1 and 2. The college is broadening its curriculum to include more vocational programmes, particularly in science, art and design, and business studies. The college provides suitable courses for students with moderate learning difficulties.

5 There are 66 full-time and 10 full-time equivalent part-time teaching staff. Support staff include three full-time buildings and site services staff, eight technicians, nine full-time and three part-time secretarial and administrative staff. Staff expressed as full-time equivalents are shown in figure 3.

6 Telford is a new town to which firms are still being attracted, the majority in the manufacturing and processing sectors. The proportion of young people staying in full-time education beyond 16 has increased from 59 per cent in 1992 to about 70 per cent in 1993. The numbers entering youth training and direct employment have both fallen by 50 per cent between 1989 and 1992.

7 Each year about 72 per cent of the college's GCE A level students proceed to higher education, 6 per cent to further education and 14 per cent to direct employment or training.

8 Telford College of Arts and Technology is the other major local provider of post-16 education. The two colleges operate a joint admissions procedure and some joint curriculum provision including the development of Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) and General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) courses. The Telford City Technology College is developing post-16 provision and one local school has acquired grant maintained status and has declared an intention to restart a sixth form.

9 The college is committed to developing a curriculum which meets the needs of a broad range of students. Its main aims are to develop the intellectual capacity of all students; to provide them with the knowledge and skills necessary for continued education, training and employment; to foster attitudes of social responsibility and to develop the personal maturity and confidence of all students.

RESPONSIVENESS AND RANGE OF PROVISION

10 The college offers mainly full-time GCE A level and GCSE courses for the 16-19 age group. In recent years, some vocational courses have been added. There is a small amount of provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Modest developments in adult education and part-time provision are beginning as the college adjusts to changes in its market. The college is proceeding slowly and cautiously towards offering a wider range of courses.

11 In 1993, 28 GCE A level and 21 GCSE subjects were available including a wide choice of science and performing arts subjects, which have strong local appeal. City and Guilds of London Institute (CGLI) courses include mathematics, English, biology, and computing. The college runs Royal Society of Arts (RSA) courses in business French and in computer literacy and information technology. Religious studies is available as an examination course at both GCSE and GCE A level: 18 students taking the subject at A level and 16 at GCSE level. The college believes that it is satisfying the requirements of the Further and Higher Education Act, 1992, by providing opportunities each week for all students to participate in acts of collective worship and requiring all students to undertake a general course in religious beliefs as part of their one or two year programme of studies.

12 Recent developments in the curriculum include BTEC national diplomas in science and in art and design. These courses have been planned in partnership with Telford College of Arts and Technology and students following them spend roughly equal amounts of time in each institution. The arrangement combines the strengths of both establishments and works well. In September 1994, the college plans to

offer GNVQ courses at intermediate level in hospitality and catering and in business studies. Full-time enrolments by curriculum area are shown in figure 4.

13 The college is well regarded in the local community. It is seen as an effective and successful establishment which offers high quality teaching and good learning opportunities. It is valued highly by parents for the results it achieves, for the breadth of interests it develops, and for the social skills it promotes in its students. Many parents and members of the community attend the college's productions and performances in the Hayward Arts Centre which they believe make a significant contribution to the cultural life of the community. Performances by nationally known artists at the centre further enrich the cultural life of the community. The economic and business community is well represented at governor level and there are plans for closer links with the local chamber of commerce including the development of work experience placements for students.

14 Relationships with partner schools have been strengthened recently. A liaison team has been established to provide closer connections between designated senior staff in the college and individual schools. The Telford Curriculum Group, which includes the college, its partner schools and the Telford College of Arts and Technology, is providing an effective forum for exchanging information, communicating viewpoints and alerting participants to plans for developing provision in the area.

15 The college uses its contacts with schools, prospective students, parents and general enquirers to promote itself effectively. The quality of its publicity material is rapidly improving. Its recently-launched broadsheet, which combines news items, celebrations of student success and details of courses, has provided a significant advance in its marketing strategy. The college is linking its promotional work to its strategic goals, but departmental and college-wide activities should be more closely integrated. The college is beginning to develop further its market research. For example, after devising an outline proposal for a new set of courses for adults on Wednesdays, staff have researched the demand for this development at recent parents' evenings and plans to start the courses are now well advanced. As yet, however, marketing procedures are not sufficiently systematic or sophisticated.

16 Equal opportunities policies are being reviewed. There is careful monitoring of the effectiveness of existing schemes through the collection of data on student achievement by gender and on student intakes by ethnic origin. Some 7 per cent of students from ethnic minority backgrounds attend the college, which is a considerably greater percentage than exists within the population of the Wrekin district.

GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

17 The governance of the college is effective. The corporation and its finance and general purpose subcommittee meet regularly. Attendance at

meetings is generally good. In addition to the principal and staff members, the membership comprises representatives of business and the community, a member from the nearby university and parents. Business members' expertise is well deployed on the subcommittees on which they serve. The representative of the local training and enterprise council (TEC) a senior member of a large employer in the area, has recently been appointed as the chair of governors.

18 The governors were involved in the development of the college's original strategic plan and contributed to the mission statement. They have been primarily engaged in those aspects of incorporation associated with finance and financial forecasting and the college has provided regular information to assist them in this. The governors are supported by a member of the local authority staff who acts as clerk and provides them with impartial professional advice.

19 Governors are regularly supplied with appropriate summary information about the college's work by the principal and senior management. They receive reports on academic issues including examination results and value added measures, as well as details of sporting success and musical and theatrical productions. About half the members of the corporation recently attended a curriculum development day where they observed teaching sessions and held discussions with students and staff. Some governors have offered to contribute to the curriculum and these offers are being taken up.

20 The college's senior management team, comprising the principal and three vice-principals, meets weekly. This team, augmented by four senior tutors, five subject area representatives and an elected staff member, forms the policy advisory committee which discusses all major areas of provision. Important issues and initiatives, for example the college strategic plan and records of achievement, are discussed in full staff meetings. There are short staff briefing sessions at the beginning of each day.

21 The principal has responsibility for the links with the governors, the community and external bodies. He makes final decisions on all major issues. The three vice-principals are, respectively, directors of studies, resources and student support and all have additional responsibilities in the area of quality management.

22 The four senior tutors each have responsibility for 13 tutor groups and some cross-college responsibilities. Most teaching staff have a tutor group, consisting of about 18 students. Currently there are 16 departments, which range in size from one to 12 staff. The larger departments have a mix of full-time and part-time staff. The departmental structure is currently under review. Consideration is being given to the clustering of departments.

23 All formal college meetings have agendas and produce recorded points for action. Many are supported by comprehensive briefing papers.

Departmental meetings are equally well managed. The history and English departments, in particular, have thorough procedures for recording and planning. Throughout the college the lines of communication are good and responsibilities within the management structure are clear.

24 Some 73 per cent of the college budget is allocated to staffing costs. Departmental budgets are allocated on a bid-response basis. The devolved allocation is finalised by the principal after consultation with members of the senior management team and consideration of college-wide requirements. Account is taken of student numbers and equipment requirements. There are additional procedures for the funding of new initiatives and major capital equipment expenditure.

25 Information has been produced on staffing costs per student for each of the major subject areas. However, no account has been taken of the cost of accommodation, support staff, tutorial activities, elective studies and other support services. The college's own calculations indicate that there is a wide variation in unit costs between subjects, but this information is made available only to senior managers. The college should review its procedures for assisting departments in costing the delivery of their subjects. There is regular consultation with staff regarding the options available to the college to meet its efficiency targets and to improve the use of relevant performance indicators.

26 The comprehensive, consultative process, undertaken for the production of the first strategic plan is being repeated for the current version of the plan. The college operates good health and safety practices. A health and safety committee has been established and a comprehensive policy produced which staff are required to acknowledge that they have received. The policy requires a safety audit to be undertaken.

27 The good lines of communication within the college produce a positive ethos. A staff handbook, which is updated annually, contains information and procedures in a succinct form. A weekly staff bulletin identifies events and activities and informs staff of students who are away from the college on approved activities. College sporting results are also included in this bulletin. More urgent information is conveyed to the staff in the daily staff briefing sessions.

28 Although useful basic information is collected and disseminated, the college has yet to profit from the full potential of its management information system. Only a small number of academic staff are aware of its potential. Networked access to the system is restricted mainly to senior managers who have yet to exploit its potential. Staff are provided with up-to-date, paper-based information on a regular basis. A member of staff who acts as management information officer, and information technology co-ordinator has in addition, a small teaching responsibility. The college has recognised the importance of this post and is in the process of reducing further the teaching commitment. Such a step is necessary if the full potential of management information collection and dissemination is to be achieved.

29 The college maintained its market share of the smallest local 16 year old cohort for several years despite the increased competition from other post-16 providers. However the college did not reach its 2.8 per cent target for growth. The number of students enrolled in September was 50 below the target figure of 920. Eleven students were lost by the time of the further education statistical returns in November and a further 35 by the time of the February returns. In all, there was a 4.1 per cent loss of students between November 1993 and February 1994. Although about half of these students were studying GCE A level courses, where the drop-out is comparable with other sixth form colleges, the overall rate of withdrawal is relatively high and a matter for concern.

30 The college has a low student-staff ratio of 11:1. In 1992-93, the unit cost per weighted full-time equivalent student was £2,893, compared with the median for sixth form colleges of £2,647. Summaries of the college's estimated income and expenditure for the 16 months to July 1994 are shown in figures 5 and 6.

STUDENTS' RECRUITMENT, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

31 The college has a comprehensive, integrated system for students' recruitment, guidance and support. The tutorial programme supports the academic progress, social and personal development and careers guidance of all students. It has developed through a process of testing and modification.

32 Activities and functions are extensively documented. The aims and objectives, the organisational structure, the management, and the roles of the contributors are clearly defined and effectively communicated. Many parts of the tutorial system provide models of good practice; for example the thematic approach to personal and social development which is experienced by all students within the tutorial framework. The coherence of the support procedures for staff, achieved through guidelines, models and training provides tutors with the confidence and the flexibility required to manage their responsibilities.

33 Recruitment begins with direct marketing, predominantly in partner schools, following common procedures collectively developed and agreed with the schools through a joint committee. The college has a co-operative relationship with Telford College of Arts and Technology which reflects a shared professional concern to see that students secure programmes of study which match their abilities and ambitions.

34 Initial guidance is provided in the partner schools, by senior staff from the college, and is backed up with good-quality printed information on course programmes. The main advertising of the college and its courses was this year published in a newspaper format delivered to every household in the Telford area. The interest and involvement of parents is actively sought and encouraged at this early stage. Where appropriate, letters to parents are written in languages other than English. Final-year

pupils who apply to the college are interviewed in their school and places are offered to all but a few applicants. After these interviews there are well-structured opportunities for prospective students to visit the college, to be involved in taster days, and to seek further guidance. Further opportunities for advice are made available to parents. Potential recruits with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are given additional advice and support before registration.

35 The college provides three main programmes of study: a two-year GCE A level programme, a one-year intermediate programme, and a pre-vocational or foundation course. Great care is taken to see that students register for the programme most appropriate for their aspirations and abilities, and there is sufficient flexibility to allow for subsequent changes of course, arranged after suitable guidance from tutors. Induction is thorough and comprehensive, enabling students to settle quickly into their studies. Course registration records are held on a computer database which is kept up to date.

36 The curriculum is enriched by an activities programme in which all students participate. The current programme is extensive. It covers some 60 activities including sports, leisure pursuits, skills development, the acquisition of foreign languages and a range of complementary studies, many of which are individually certificated. Support for learning difficulties and/or disabilities is provided at all levels, and the college commissions external support agencies wherever the specialist expertise is not available. Students are required to complete a balanced core of educational and complementary studies which is checked during the induction programme.

37 Procedures for maintaining a continuous record of assessment are soundly and consistently managed. The college has achieved external recognition of quality standards in the management of students' records of achievements, from the West Midlands Group for the Accreditation of Records of Achievements. Students' attendance is effectively monitored. Guidance and advice is available to students through daily and weekly tutorial opportunities and at scheduled times in the year, linked to the academic and applications cycle. There is a well-resourced careers department which is staffed by tutors with specified responsibilities. There are direct links into the main tutorial organisation through its divisional structure.

38 A work placement arranged through the careers department is mandatory for students on a pre-vocational programme. All other students are offered work experience. Some 25 per cent take up the option. Other functions and services offered by the careers department include the organisation of a higher education conference and the publication of a fortnightly bulletin. Immediately after GCE A level results are issued, the careers department offers an advisory evening for parents and students followed by a week in which individual advice can be sought. The college has a published schedule of parents' evenings and meetings which are well attended throughout the year.

TEACHING AND THE PROMOTION OF LEARNING

39 Over three quarters of the sessions inspected were graded 1 or 2 and of these a quarter were grade 1. The teaching of history and music were particularly effective. The grades awarded to the sessions inspected are summarised below.

Teaching sessions: inspection grades by programme of study

Programmes	Grade	1	2	3	4	5	Totals
GCE A/AS level		21	33	11	1	0	66
GCSE		1	11	2	1	0	15
Other		1	9	3	2	0	15
Total		23	53	16	4	0	96

40 In most subjects, there were well-developed schemes of work, covering aims, objectives and content. Students were provided with good-quality course handbooks. They also benefited from the recently-introduced workshops which offer additional opportunities for learning through individual and group consultations with staff. The majority of lessons were well planned and well organised.

41 Teachers had a good command of their subjects. Students were encouraged to develop their knowledge and skills and the pace of work was generally well matched to their abilities. In many subjects, teachers developed students' general literacy, numeracy, oral and aural skills as well as their subject-specific skills. They also took the opportunity to extend students' vocabulary wherever possible. In biology, the induction programme placed particular emphasis on core skills. In art and design, students were introduced to appropriate practices, procedures and standards. In modern languages, classes were conducted in the foreign language and grammatical points were explained effectively. In computing, the emphasis on realistic case studies helped students to develop their understanding of practical applications.

42 Teachers employed an imaginative range of teaching techniques and were successful in maintaining students' interest. Students responded well, both to formal exposition, when they were required to listen and take notes, and to situations in which they were expected to raise issues or to participate in discussion. Some of the well-managed work in history involved students in group discussions and subsequent presentations of their findings to the whole class, using overhead projector slides to structure their deliveries. In music, the teaching was lively and students experienced a wide range of methods of working, including instrumental and choral performance practice. In English, teachers' presentational techniques encouraged students to take initiatives and to pursue analyses of literary texts with rigour. In one GCSE mathematics class, the teacher set up a competition as a successful means of assisting students to revise key aspects of their work.

43 Practical work was generally well organised. In mathematics, practical activities involving the use of graphical calculators, experimentation and group work were particularly effective. In subjects such as science, the integration of theory and practice was well managed through teachers' demonstrations and students' experimental work. There was good attention to health and safety procedures and students were alerted to potential hazards.

44 The quality and range of students' knowledge and skills are developed further by the opportunities to participate in field work, for example in history, and in workshops and concerts in music. Music students give performances both in college and in the local community. This gives them experience of the particular demands of public performance.

45 Students' assignments are well managed. The tasks set are suitably challenging. Students' written work is returned to them promptly and teachers' comments are generally full and supportive. Art and design students are encouraged to use information technology to complete their assignments. In science, the BTEC assignment programme is well established and a work experience component is being introduced. The quality of students' written work is improved by the wide range of tasks which they are expected to complete.

STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENT

46 Students demonstrated high levels of motivation and enthusiasm in classes. They took pride in work well done and were ambitious to achieve higher standards.

47 Classwork and written work indicated that students were acquiring appropriate oral and written skills. Students in English spoke well in classes, often making sharp and well-focused comments. In GCE A level design, many of the students' case studies were related to work placements and were completed to a high standard. In physics, GCE A level chemistry and biology, students showed an excellent understanding of the work.

48 In music, individual and group performances are encouraged by lunchtime recitals. There are chamber groups, an orchestra, a choir and the college concert band which, last summer, completed a successful tour of the Isle of Wight.

49 There are good opportunities for students to develop information technology skills through the use of open-access facilities. Some courses, for example design and technology, chemistry and biology, do not sufficiently encourage the use of computers.

50 The college's success in external examinations is a strong testimony to the considerable strengths of the teaching and guidance given by staff, and to the commitment of the students. In 1993, the overall college pass rate in GCE A level examinations was 85 per cent compared with the national average of 80 per cent for all sixth form colleges. Thirty-seven students obtained three subjects at grades A and B. The 299 students,

aged 16-18, taking two or more A levels achieved an average points score of 13.9 (where A = 10, E = 2), placing the college in the top 15 per cent of colleges within the further education sector. Given the open access policy which the college pursues this represents a considerable achievement. For GCSE the overall pass rate grades A - C, was 62 per cent. This represents the college's best performance for many years and compares with the average of 50 per cent for sixth form colleges nationally.

51 There were good GCE A level results in several curriculum areas. In design, music and media studies over 40 per cent of candidates achieved grades A or B. A pass rate of 100 per cent was obtained in design studies, home economics, further mathematics and religious studies, and there was a pass rate of over 90 per cent in art and design, business studies, English literature, German, history, law, music, and physics. In most of the remaining subjects pass rates were over 80 per cent, but human biology results have declined to an unsatisfactory level. In nearly half of the subjects at GCSE level, students achieved a pass rate, grades A - C, of over 70 per cent. Pass rates in Spanish and Urdu were 100 per cent and there were particularly good results in English and physics. Mathematics results were above the national average and showed a slight improvement over the previous year.

52 In 1993, approximately 72 per cent of GCE A level leavers entered higher education, 14 per cent sought employment, and 6 per cent went into further education. There was no conclusive data for 8 per cent of leavers. About 17 per cent of students completing courses at foundation and intermediate levels returned to the college. Of those who left, 32 per cent entered employment or youth training, 42 per cent moved to other further education colleges, and for the remaining 9 per cent destinations were unknown.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

53 A working party of the policy advisory committee is developing a college charter. It has already produced a comprehensive draft for wider consideration and approval.

54 In the light of experience, the college has adopted a model for quality improvement which involves all the staff. Quality improvement has been established without the need for excessive documentation or standardisation. Most staff have been involved in quality assurance activities for several years and have observed the benefits that an emphasis on quality improvement can bring. Each department publishes its own quality statement and cross-college services are subject to quality reviews. All departments are required to produce annual subject reviews.

55 For many years, departmental staff have been required to set targets for retention rates, examination success, added value, and student destinations. Recently, departments have also been asked to establish targets for enrolments. Performances in relation to these targets are

discussed every autumn in departmental review meetings with members of the senior management team before new targets are set and agreed for the following year. Performance is compared, where possible, with all institutions nationally and with other sixth form colleges. Added value, which is the measure of each students' progress whilst at college, is calculated for each teaching group within a subject and reasons are sought for differences in performance between these groups. Areas in which there is relatively poor performance are selected for improvement in future years. The views of students are obtained from questionnaires and from detailed interviews with students from each of the 52 tutor groups. The students' perceptions of induction, the college, and subject courses are fed back into the departmental review meetings. Added value and retention analyses are correlated with the schools from which students come, and the information used when discussions are held with these schools.

56 The college has shown itself responsive to students' views; for example in the introduction of taster days for students entering the college, increased subject content in the induction programmes at the start of courses and subject workshop sessions to enable students to receive one-to-one tuition. Staff have also introduced changes, for example, in mathematics where a new GCE A level syllabus has been selected in an attempt to improve examination success and an alternate syllabus is followed by students resitting GCSE.

57 College-wide retention rates are monitored monthly by the senior management. About 5 per cent of the students drop out each year. In an attempt to reduce this, the college is increasing its liaison with partner schools so as to prepare students for post-16 education. Careful attention is also given to drop-out rates at departmental level.

58 Objectives for quality assurance have been discussed and agreed at two full staff meetings. Team groups are required to evaluate their performance against their own previously-published quality statements. Three subjects and two cross-college service areas are undertaking a detailed pilot study to produce a standard model for self evaluation of performance. This model will incorporate an increased number of performance indicators and a new framework for target setting. A draft quality assurance policy has been circulated to senior management and will be reviewed in the light of the pilot studies. The college intends to progress further in quality assurance before proceeding with the Investors in People initiative. Senior staff are in consultation with local industries over the Investors in People programme and the college anticipates that the quality systems already in place will enable it to achieve the award in the near future.

59 Little use is made of the management information system for quality improvement as it is currently unable to provide detailed information on the college's performance measures. To compensate for this, several databases have been developed which use spread sheets to hold performance data. Although the information produced in this way is

accurate it is difficult to use in measuring trends.

60 There have been few new staff appointments in recent years. Nevertheless, there is a well-documented programme of induction for new staff. They are introduced to the college and their department and given a training day off-site in their first few weeks. Subsequently, they are consulted as to their requirements for training and individual programmes are developed. Activities are supervised by the head of department and the director of studies.

61 Some 50 of the 66 full-time academic staff have been appraised. There is a comprehensive appraisal booklet. The process includes observation of a minimum of two one-hour teaching sessions, self appraisal and an interview. Targets for improvement are set and agreed in areas which include personal development, teaching and student management, tutorial work, administration, working with colleagues and in-service training. Support staff and part-time academic staff are not yet included in this appraisal system. However, all support staff are interviewed to agree their job description, contract terms and identify job training requirements. These processes enable staff development needs to be identified.

62 Some £40,000 has been allocated to staff development for the sixteen month period April 1993 to July 1994. This is just over one per cent of the college's budget, but it does not include supply staff costs where staff have to be replaced for a period. Staff development activities include management training and attendance at conferences, curriculum development, assessment training and cross-college activities. Several staff have been on GNVQ training sessions and six are undertaking assessor training and verifier courses. Staff are required to disseminate the information gained from development activities either at departmental or cross-college levels.

RESOURCES

Staffing

63 The number of men and women on the staff is roughly equal. Academic staff are well qualified for the subjects they teach. Eighty five per cent are graduates, 27 per cent have one or more second degrees, and 80 per cent have qualified teacher status. There is a low level of recent industrial or professional experience.

64 Teaching staff are supported by a team of eight technicians, most of whom are employed for term-time only. Between them the technicians provide effective support in most subject areas. Other support staff are well integrated into the college team and readily demonstrate their goodwill by undertaking extra duties. Most of the recommendations put forward by a working party, for improvements in the supply of support staff to certain areas of work, have been implemented. Technician support for art and design remains insufficient.

65 Finance staff in the administrative section, two of whom are employed for term-time only, have a full capacity workload. Problems arise in clearing paperwork promptly, particularly in the summer holiday period. The premises team has no spare capacity to take on additional evening commitments or to cover for absence owing to sickness.

Equipment

66 In almost all departments the supplies of equipment and teaching materials are adequate. There are good, up-to-date reprographic facilities and support staff are available to process the large volume of work.

67 Some departments make good use of computers in the delivery of the curriculum. Drop-in centres for information technology and modern foreign languages offer excellent resources. However, typewriters used for modern foreign languages are unable to reproduce all the required characters, and there is a shortage of computer-aided design facilities in design and technology.

68 The college has about 130 computers which give a ratio of full-time equivalent students to computers of 7:1. Many of these computers are accessible either in the library or in a well-equipped, open-access centre. However, a significant proportion of the computers are becoming obsolete and unable to handle some of the most up-to-date software.

69 The library facilities are good in relation to the size of the college. They include open-access computer provision, microfiche, CD-ROM and photocopier, as well as a large private study area. There is a policy for liaison between the library and departments which is clearly effective in identifying resource needs in new areas such as GNVQ. The book stock in most subject areas is good, though books for GCE A level English language are not up to the standard of those for English literature. There is a good range of periodicals, cuttings, video and other flexible learning materials, and 20 CD-ROM discs which are used regularly. Library opening hours currently offer students ample opportunities for study.

Accommodation

70 The college is situated on one site. The accommodation is generally well suited to its purpose, and furniture and fittings are appropriate. The standard of cleaning and maintenance is high. Each departmental area has its own suite of rooms and these areas are often enhanced by excellent displays of posters, photographs, student work and records of visits, both in the teaching areas and in adjacent corridors.

71 Recent developments include the provision of the information technology centre, a fitness centre and a language centre. The newest building, the impressive Hayward Arts Centre, is used for a range of workshops, drama and musical productions, conferences and exhibitions. As well as teaching rooms, there is a first-rate studio theatre with dressing rooms and a large foyer. At times, there are insufficient practice rooms for music.

72 A recent room utilisation survey is being used to rationalise the use of space. Accommodation is not used to full capacity in many areas, partly because some of the rooms are large for the teaching groups which use them. Some home economics and physics specialist accommodation is substantially under-used. The college's Wednesday activity programme offers around 15 off-site sports activities in addition to a range of ball, racket and team game facilities on site. Students have access to a wide variety of other off-site learning environments, involving fieldwork, industrial visits, university lectures and cultural events, both dramatic and musical. The college is offering adult courses on Wednesday afternoons to take advantage of the accommodation available at that time.

73 Many parts of the site are accessible to students with restricted mobility, and a ramp, for which building plans are well advanced, will provide access to most other areas of the college. The college reception area is not sufficiently well sited to project the college and its activities to best advantage. Students' social and canteen facilities are pleasant and well maintained, but congested at times. Landscaping around newer buildings, lawns and small garden areas make the site visually attractive. The Library has work areas on two floors and provides a good environment for study.

CONCLUSIONS AND ISSUES

77 The college is making good progress towards achieving its aims of providing high quality, open-access education for students over the age of 16. Its strengths are:

- effective governance and management
- the strong links with partner schools
- good channels of communication
- a comprehensive and effective system for students' recruitment, guidance and support
- the extensive and balanced enrichment programme for students
- high standards of teaching
- good examination results
- well-established procedures for quality assurance and the use of performance indicators
- effective procedures for staff appraisal
- some excellent accommodation.

78 The college should address the following issues:

- the strengthening of its market analysis
- assistance to departments in costing their work
- its relatively high unit costs and low student-staff ratio.

FIGURES

-
- 1 Percentage enrolments by age (1993-94)

 - 2 Percentage enrolments by level of study (1993-94)

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

 - 4 Full-time enrolments by curriculum area (1993-94)

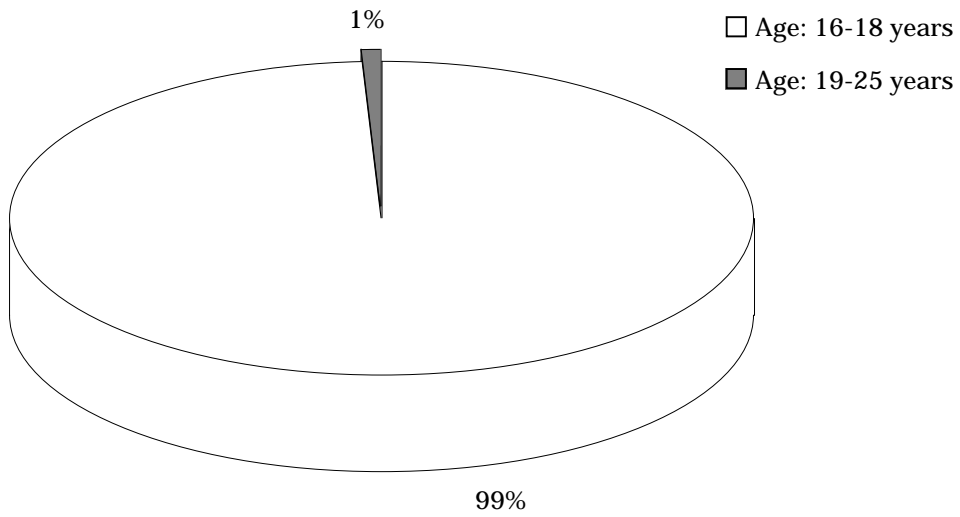
 - 5 Estimated income (16 months to July 1994)

 - 6 Estimated expenditure (16 months to July 1994)

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

Figure 1

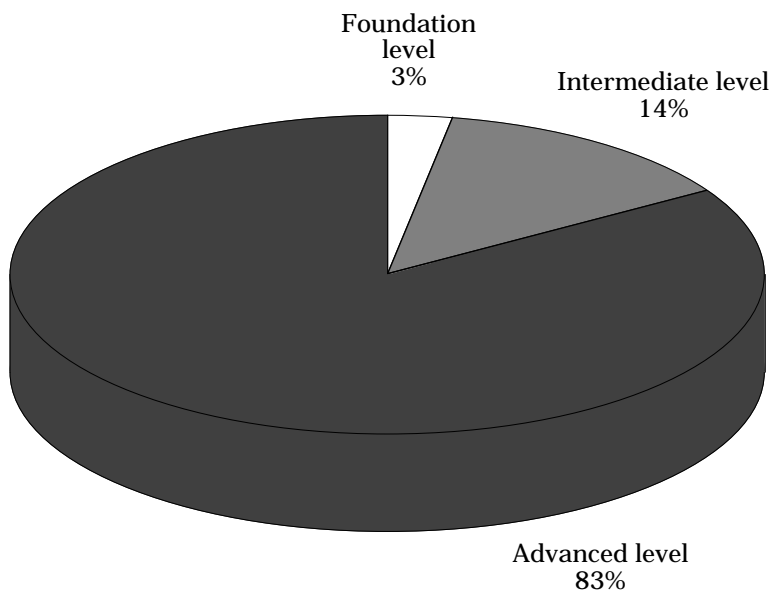
New College Telford: percentage enrolments by age (1993-94)



Enrolments: 828

Figure 2

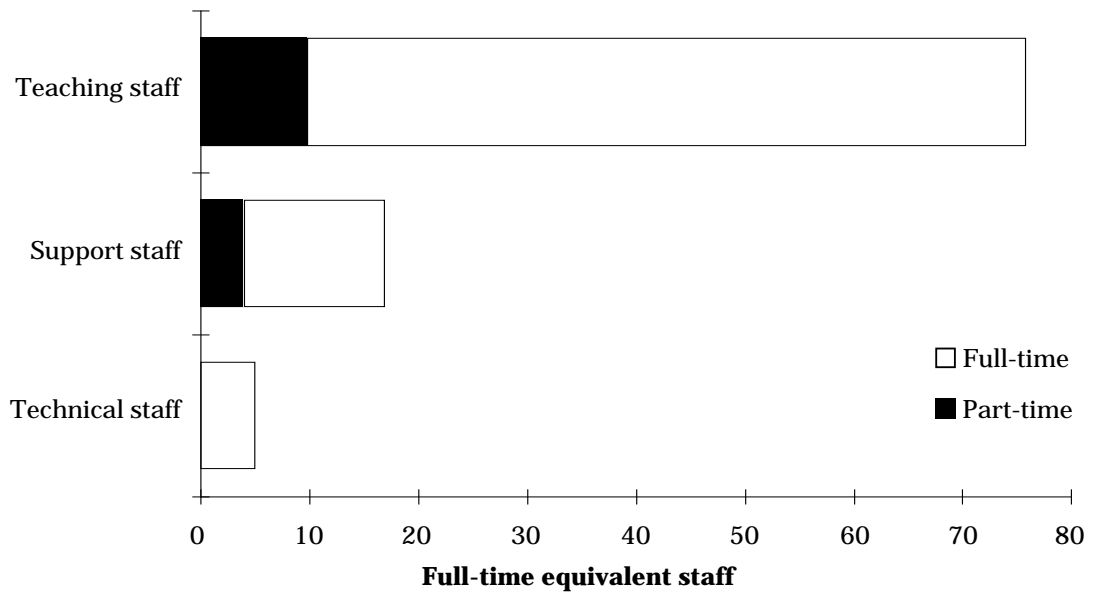
New College Telford: percentage enrolments by level of study (1993-94)



Enrolments: 828

Figure 3

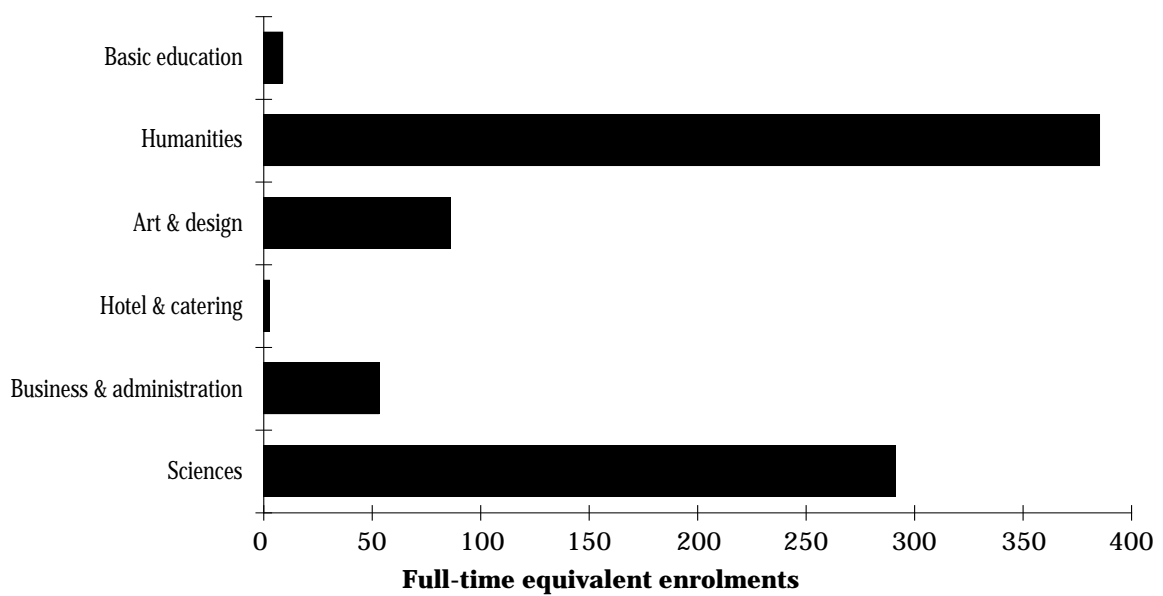
New College Telford: staff profile – staff expressed as full-time equivalents (1993-94)



Full-time equivalent staff: 98

Figure 4

New College Telford: full-time enrolments by curriculum area (1993-94)



Enrolments: 828

Figure 5

New College Telford: estimated income (16 months to July 1994)

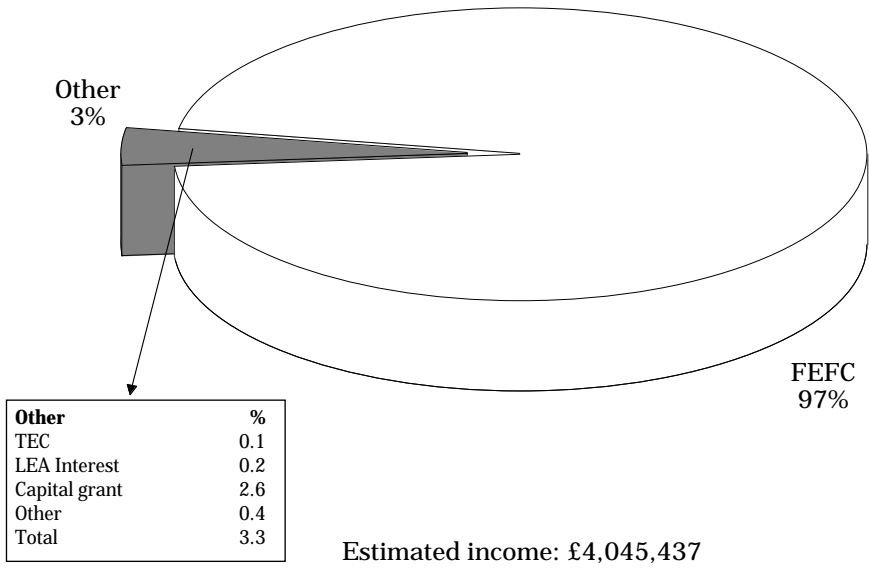
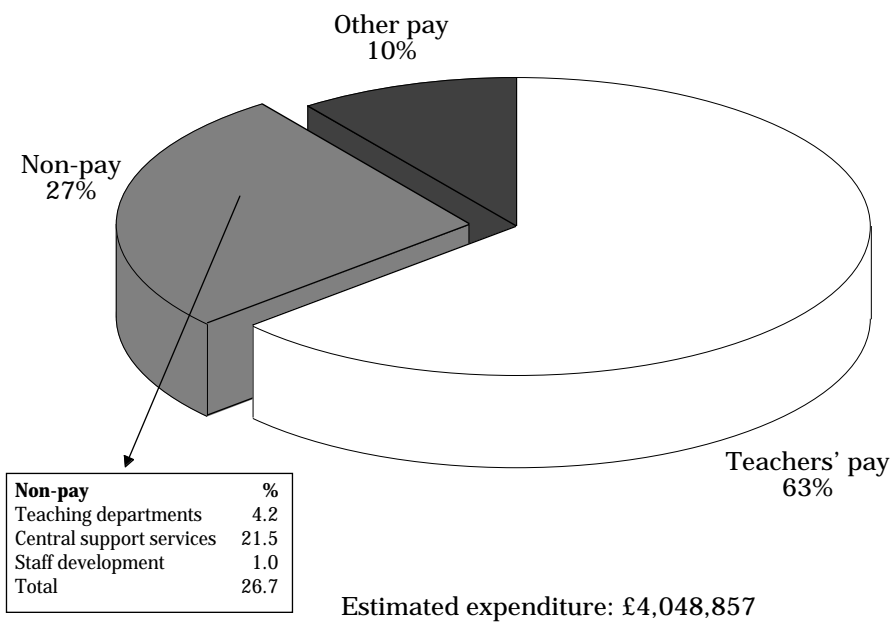


Figure 6

New College Telford: estimated expenditure (16 months to July 1994)



Published by the
Further Education Funding Council
July 1994