Wyggeston Collegiate Sixth Form College

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FUNDING COUNCIL***

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

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

GRADE DESCRIPTORS

The procedures for assessing quality are set out in the Council Circular 93/28. During their inspection, inspectors assess the strengths and weaknesses of each aspect of provision they inspect. Their assessments are set out in the reports. They also use a five-point grading scale to summarise the balance between strengths and weaknesses. The descriptors for the grades are:

- *grade 1 – provision which has many strengths and very few weaknesses*

- *grade 2 – provision in which the strengths clearly outweigh the weaknesses*

- *grade 3 – provision with a balance of strengths and weaknesses*

- *grade 4 – provision in which the weaknesses clearly outweigh the strengths*

- *grade 5 – provision which has many weaknesses and very few strengths.*

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FEFC INSPECTION REPORT 54/95

WYGGESTON COLLEGIATE SIXTH FORM COLLEGE
EAST MIDLANDS REGION
Inspected November 1994 – February 1995

Summary

Wyggeston Collegiate Sixth Form College is located in the city of Leicester. It provides a range of courses for school leavers in a supportive environment. Detailed information and guidance is provided to students through a thorough recruitment and induction process which builds on the co-operative relationships established with partner schools. Governors provide professional guidance and advice. Senior managers of the college work well together as a team. The college has well-qualified and caring staff. There is good practice in teaching and learning which needs to be shared and encouraged in all areas of the college. Progress is being made on the development of quality assurance procedures. Student achievement could be further promoted by consistent use of value-added analysis and monitoring. If the college is to attract and support adult students, it must develop measures to cater for them. College management should: ensure that departmental management is consistent; develop support in all courses to improve students' core skills of communication, numeracy and information technology; evaluate the recently-revised tutorial programme; ensure consistent implementation of quality assurance procedures; develop resources to support more independent learning; establish a strategy for the planned replacement of equipment; and improve access for wheelchair users.

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

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

Curriculum area	Grade	Curriculum area	Grade
Sciences	3	Art and design	2
Mathematics and computing	3		
Business including economics	2	Social sciences	2
		English	2

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

1   Wyggeston Collegiate Sixth Form College, Leicester was inspected between November 1994 and February 1995. A total of 45 inspector days were used for the inspection. This included an evaluation of the college charter by an inspector with experience from outside the world of education. Inspectors visited 108 classes involving some 1,400 students and examined samples of students' work. They held discussions with staff, employers, students, parents and governors, as well as representatives of local schools, the community, higher education and the Leicestershire Training and Enterprise Council (TEC).

THE COLLEGE AND ITS AIMS

2   Wyggeston Collegiate was first established as a sixth form college in 1976. The college operates from a single site of approximately 12 acres situated one mile from the centre of Leicester, using buildings constructed for a grammar school in 1928. There is little residential property in the immediate vicinity. The population of Leicester is approximately 270,000 of whom over 28 per cent are from minority ethnic backgrounds, mainly of Asian origin. Sixty-eight per cent of college students are from minority ethnic backgrounds. The city is noted for the diversity of its economy, with the traditional emphasis being on hosiery, knitwear and associated manufacturing trades. Leicester has had an unemployment rate of around 15 per cent over recent years.

3   School leavers are recruited to the college from a large number of schools and colleges but 71 per cent of students enrolled are drawn from the fifteen 11-16 partner schools in Leicester. Within the city and the immediate area, there are two other sixth form colleges, three general further education colleges and a range of 11-18 and 14-18 schools and colleges. A substantial demographic downturn since the mid-1980s has resulted in the number of 16 year olds in the area falling for the last seven years. The effects of this have been partly mitigated by increasing participation in post-compulsory education. In 1993, the participation rate of school leavers in the city of Leicester was 65.3 per cent. Since the college became an independent corporation enrolments have increased by 25 per cent. Sixteen adult students became the first adult learners at the college in 1993. At the time of inspection there were 664 students enrolled at the college. Enrolments by age and by level of study are shown in figures 1 and 2. Enrolments by mode of attendance and curriculum area are shown in figure 3.

4   There are 46 full-time equivalent teaching staff and 10 full-time equivalent support staff. A staff profile, with staff expressed as full-time equivalents is shown in figure 4. In addition the college benefits from specialist teaching from a full-time equivalent of two staff who are contracted from a Leicestershire Local Education Authority (LEA) project to work on language support, and a further teacher from the LEA special needs service. The college is organised, in the main, through subject

departments. The senior management team comprises the principal and three vice-principals. Financial management is strengthened by the employment of a professional accountant in a joint appointment with Gateway Sixth Form College.

5   The college's stated mission is to provide high-quality academic and vocational education in a friendly, safe and hard-working environment and to be responsive to the needs and interests of individual students. The extension of access to all those who show a willingness to learn, regardless of ability, personal characteristics or social and cultural background is central to the philosophy and operation of the college. The college expects the recent rapid expansion of its general vocational provision to continue, and plans to attract a higher proportion of adult learners to its courses in future years.

RESPONSIVENESS AND RANGE OF PROVISION

6   The college operates in a competitive market but it has steadily increased its student numbers. From 1992-93 to 1993-94 the number of students at the college grew from 538 to 604, an increase of 12 per cent. In November 1994 the number of students was 664, a further growth of 9 per cent over the preceding year.

7   The college markets its courses to schools effectively. There is good liaison with feeder schools to support leavers making their post-16 choices. Taster visits are arranged for groups of school pupils to sample the college. College staff attend school parents' evenings if invited. They also support the Leicester Opportunities Careers Fair which lasts for three days. After students enrol at the college there is continuing contact with the schools. The course choice of students is fed back and any further information which the college receives after students leave the college is passed on to the schools. To promote the college there is an open evening in November. The college produces a general college brochure and specific course leaflets which are appropriately more informative rather than promotional. A college video has been recorded; it has a focus on academic achievement and features interviews with students who comment favourably on college life.

8   There are close links with the Leicester City Cluster, a voluntary association of schools and colleges, which aims to develop a coherent approach to the needs of the 14-19 age range. The college buys into the cluster expertise for work experience placements, higher education links and General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) workshops.

9   Links exist with a number of higher education institutions. In 1993-94, a foundation engineering programme was operated for Leicester University and seven students started and completed the programme. Approximately 70 students from the college have attended taster courses organised by the three local universities of Loughborough, De Montfort and Leicester. The college participates in schemes with Coventry

University and the University of Warwick which are aimed at increasing participation of students in higher education.

10   Contacts with the Leicestershire TEC are limited. The college received TEC funding in 1993-94 to support an adult training programme. The college did not obtain flexibility funding for 1994-95. It receives TEC papers including labour market intelligence.

11   There are no full-cost courses, assessment or consultancy services for employers. There are no arrangements for effectively using information on local employer needs. Contacts with local employers are for specific curriculum activities and work experience. In the 'world of finance' programme, which has 16 students, representatives from three local companies inform students about the various areas of their work. Twelve first-year General Certificate of Education advanced level (GCE A level) students participate in the access to business course which involves business related tasks. A young enterprise scheme for business initiative is operated, but of the 20 who began this project less than 10 are now continuing. In 1993-94, a total of 14 students spent one or two weeks on work experience placements.

12   Contact with community groups is limited principally to letting of college premises. There is a play scheme during the college holidays and the hall is let each month to the National Trust. The college has identified a need for minority ethnic language translation services and uses the local authority communication services. The college should consider the provision of other multi-lingual services to assist in dealing with personal callers.

13   Students benefit from an increasing range of general vocational and academic programmes. There are 23 GCE A level subject courses and some of these are offered as GCE advanced supplementary (AS) courses. In 1994-95, there are two intermediate and two advanced GNVQ programmes with 135 students. In 1995-96, it is proposed to increase the GNVQ provision further. Twenty-four General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) subjects are offered. The suitability of GCSE English and mathematics for some students is a cause for concern. The only provision for students who on entry do not possess a grade C in GCSE mathematics is a re-sit GCSE mathematics course. As the A-C pass rate of only 30 per cent indicates, it fails to meet the needs of a significant number of students. The number of students on the GCSE re-sit programme has declined by 30 per cent over the last two years as the general vocational options have increased.

14   Few adult students attend the college. There is no special course provision for adults or special measures to cater for adult students, such as a creche, though adult students do have their own tutor group. Twenty-eight adults enrolled in 1994-95 and eight have since left. In the 1993-94 academic year 16 adult students started and nine completed the year. Three went on to higher education, one to a further education college and

three continued at the college to study for GCE A levels. The strategic plan identifies the need to improve access to college courses by promoting opportunities for individual study. There has been little progress towards this aim.

15   There are three students with learning difficulties who have statements of educational need. In addition, 11 students following GCSE and 14 students following GNVQ courses also receive specific learning support. A tutor has been appointed for 22 hours a week to support students with learning difficulties. There are a few students with disabilities. Two visually impaired students attend the college. The college buildings are not suitable for wheelchair users.

16   The college welcomes students from minority ethnic backgrounds. Sixty-eight per cent of the college population is from minority ethnic groups. The majority of these are of Asian origin. The college prospectus and charter contain statements on equal opportunities but these have not been derived from a comprehensive college policy. No member of the senior management team has a designated responsibility for equal opportunities. There is no direct reference to equal opportunities in the staff or student handbook. Within the student code there is a statement emphasising that racism, sexism or other forms of harassment will not be tolerated. Employment policy includes a section on equal opportunities. The college's work in this area would benefit from a more comprehensive and coherent framework.

GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

17   The corporation board has 18 members and two student observers. Nine independent members are drawn from commerce, the public utilities, the financial sector and higher education. Other members include a representative from Leicestershire TEC, staff nominees, co-opted members, parent governors and the college principal. There is a good working relationship between the chairman of governors and the principal. Almost half of the board were members before incorporation and this has provided a degree of continuity of membership which has been an asset through a period of change and development.

18   The college benefits from the guidance and advice available from corporation members. The board aims to provide overall direction and support to the college while entrusting the operational management to the principal and the senior management team. There is no structured induction for new members of the corporation and no planned training for governors. Consideration needs to be given to the responsibilities of the clerk to the corporation and the contribution of the clerk to the work of the corporation board. The board has indicated its intention to review this role. Three committees have been established: finance and general purposes, audit, and remuneration. Clear terms of reference which define the responsibilities and procedures of all committees are required.

19   The senior management team comprises the principal and three vice-principals. This team works well together, ensuring the effective day-to-day operation of the college. There is a clear understanding of their roles which in addition to their management responsibilities include duties as senior tutors for the college. The team meets on a weekly basis but no minutes are kept. This lack of a record of decisions taken weakens the accountability of senior management. Information is distributed through staff and student bulletins and a weekly staff briefing. Staff and students regard managers as supportive and trust the present management approach.

20   Strategic planning is developing and improving. Senior management team members gather information through a combination of discussion with individual tutors and an analysis of departmental development plans. No formal feedback on the appropriateness of the plans is given to the departments. The senior management team draft out the strategic plan for consultation with staff and discussion, amendment and approval by the governors. The plan sets out a three-year strategic overview and there are annual operating statements for particular areas of the college's provision which set objectives with clear timescales and identify staff responsibilities for achieving the targets. The plan also includes a review of the previous year's operating statements and a detailed analysis of retention rates, value-added information and reasons for students leaving. Personal details of students who have left are inappropriately included in the strategic plan.

21   The requirement that governors should approve all policies is not being fulfilled. Some policies receive confirmation by governors, some by an academic board which has no specific remit or authority and some policies are created by individual staff or sections without reference to anyone. Current policies vary considerably in format and effectiveness. The college's health and safety policy is an example of good practice. It has a clear and succinct introductory statement signed on the governors' behalf by the chairman and this is followed by a comprehensive account of procedures and the range of responsibilities and duties. Staff, however, have no clear understanding of what policies exist. There is a need for a college-wide system for the approval and communication of policies.

22   An academic board acts as a forum for heads of departments. It has no established terms of reference or agreed membership. Whilst any member of staff can attend these meetings, no non-teaching staff or student representatives do so. Some staff are unclear whether the academic board is a decision making or policy making body.

23   Departmental procedures are not consistent. Departmental meetings are not recorded systematically. Some departments do keep minutes of meetings but these are not always shared outside the team or with senior colleagues and are not available centrally for information.   Most departments have a departmental plan but they are not produced to a common framework. Some do not specify timescales or responsibilities

and a number do not have a clear link to the strategic plan. A corporate approach to the conduct of meetings, dissemination of minutes and production of plans would be more effective.

24   The existing departmental organisation is complicated to manage. Some 50 per cent of the full-time teaching staff are designated heads of department, cross-college co-ordinators or senior managers. There are 17 departments which range in size from nine staff to one. A number of cross-college responsibilities, which are emerging to meet new demands, have implications for the present departmental structure.

25   The college's average level of funding for 1994-95 is £23.83 per unit. The median for sixth form colleges is £19.81. Summaries of income and expenditure for the 16 months to July 1994 are shown in figures 5 and 6. The joint appointment with Gateway Sixth Form College of an accountant who works half time in each institution has enabled the college to improve its budget setting and monitoring. Well-structured monthly financial reports are distributed to governors and monthly statements are generated for budget holders. The management of the budget is tightly controlled by the principal who releases a small initial allocation while retaining over 30 per cent at the centre. The initial allocation is calculated on a formula basis related to student numbers. Budget holders can bid for additional resources once enrolments are known. However, some heads of department are unaware of how financial allocations are made. Budget holders do not relate their annual budgets to their development plans. Training is required to ensure that budget holders link their planning to strategic financial planning.

26   The management information system is adequate and includes student records, examinations and finance. The addition of an individual student record module is currently being considered. There is a duplication of information held throughout the college in both manual and electronic forms. Not all information is readily accessible or able to be reported in a format which is useful for staff. However, heads of departments do not use effectively the management reports which are available.

27   The college is developing its understanding of performance indicators which are increasingly used by the teaching staff and monitored regularly by the corporation. The calculation of unit costs is in its early stages.

STUDENTS' RECRUITMENT, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

28   Students receive adequate information and impartial guidance during an integrated programme of recruitment, enrolment and induction activities. Induction is undertaken over an extended period before courses begin. On initial application all prospective students are given a guidance interview. Students visit the college again in June for a familiarisation visit. Before enrolment an individual meeting is arranged to discuss examination results and choice of course. Students are assured that, even if they do not achieve the level of examination results required for their

chosen course, they still have a place at the college and guidance will be provided for them to find an appropriate alternative. Students are required to bring their records of achievement for reference during their interviews. Students subsequently come into the college to collect timetable information, and an introductory letter including a copy of the timetable for each student is sent to parents by the tutor. Continued induction and guidance is undertaken through tutor groups. There are no arrangements for the assessment or accreditation of prior learning.

29   There is a strong tradition of pastoral care at the college and there is an obvious concern for the well being of individuals. The present intimate scale of the college means that the informal arrangements for welfare advice and counselling are effective. One of the vice-principals with responsibility for the pastoral programme is a trained counsellor. Students and parents speak warmly of the support received from tutors. Detailed reports on individual students are provided three times a year and are sent directly to parents of students under 18 years of age. Parents are invited to regular consultation evenings.

30   A revised group tutorial programme was introduced in September 1994. The aim is to provide a structured timetable and a consistent approach, particularly for the delivery of a study skills module and a careers package. However, the way in which tutorial materials are presented varies. The time allocated is short and tutors find difficulty in responding to the needs of individuals. Many students do not value the group tutorial sessions and the college should review their purpose and content. In addition to the group tutorial, students have individual progress interviews at least termly. Students value this individual support from tutors. Records of interviews are kept with action points highlighted but students do not automatically receive a copy of their interview records. The interview during the first term provides the opportunity for students and tutors to consider transfer between courses where appropriate. Personal records of achievement are maintained through the tutorial process. This approach to recording achievement is being reviewed as the college has recognised the need to focus more sharply on students' own analysis of their achievements.

31   Comprehensive careers education and advice is available to all students. The support provided for applications to higher education is thorough. On entry to the college each student is allocated to a careers tutor. There are five careers tutors who each look after seven tutorial groups and, in addition, have particular responsibility for a specific area of specialist advice. A careers package is introduced through the tutorial programme and supervised by the careers tutor. The college has a service agreement with the Leicestershire Careers Service who spend approximately two days per week in the college and provide opportunities for group sessions and personal interviews. There is a pleasant careers area which is well stocked with informative literature. Students are also

able to access data through computer packages. There is no effective, comprehensive analysis of the use of the careers area.

32   The language support team provides good support for students for whom English is their second language. The team provides individual support and also works in class with groups of students on GCSE courses. There is a need for similar language support in class for students on GNVQ programmes. There is no policy or co-ordinated approach for the development of communication, numeracy and information technology skills across the full range of courses, other than basic support provided in language and numeracy for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Central support for most students' individual needs in these skills is weak. Diagnostic screening and subsequent support where it is needed is offered only to students with qualifications at the lower end of the requirement for a specific course. GCSE English and mathematics courses as a means of support are not suitable in many cases. Cross-college support for information technology lacks co-ordination.

33   There is a formal system for monitoring the attendance and punctuality of students. Class observations by inspectors showed an average absence rate of 14 per cent. There were many instances of late arrival which were not questioned. Both of these aspects are a cause for concern. In recognition of an increase in absences and lateness the college is implementing this monitoring system more rigorously.

34   The college sends a letter to all students and their parents requesting their views on a weekly act of collective worship. To date, the response has meant that no such assemblies have been held. Opportunities for Christian worship are made available through the Christian Union. Facilities for other faiths are provided on request; for example, suitable prayer facilities have been provided for Muslim students.

35   Students have access to a range of sporting facilities, community placements, residential visits, conferences and work experience. The college has an active student council which includes a representative drawn from each tutor group. The council arranges a programme of events. Two members are observers at governors' meetings. One of the vice-principals acts as a link between the student council and the senior management team.

TEACHING AND THE PROMOTION OF LEARNING

36   Over 57 per cent of the 108 sessions observed had strengths which clearly outweighed weaknesses. Eight per cent of sessions had more weaknesses than strengths. The distribution of inspection grades is shown in the following table.

Teaching sessions: inspection grades by programme of study

Programmes	Grade	1	2	3	4	5	Totals
GCE AS/A level		11	23	20	2	0	56
GCSE		4	13	5	4	0	26
GNVQ		1	6	7	2	1	17
Other		0	4	5	0	0	9
Total		16	46	37	8	1	108

37   Individual teaching and learning programmes in the business studies area are carefully planned and well organised but they are not co-ordinated across all the business studies programmes. There are comprehensive, detailed schemes of work and extensive learning materials for GCE A level and GCSE courses. Teachers adopt a variety of techniques and use a range of modern resources. The progress of students is monitored carefully. Homework is set and marked regularly with helpful comments for students. The GNVQ programme is still in its early stages. The courses are organised efficiently but more development is needed, particularly to ensure the overall coherence of teaching programmes. The teaching of core skills within the GNVQ programme does not always relate to the vocational context or the work being done by other core skills teachers.   The department has developed a range of learning resources but these are not easily accessible to students.

38   In science, the teaching of GCE A level classes is sound, particularly in small groups. There are very good relationships between students and their teachers. Schemes of work are available for all lessons and aims and objectives are often shared. There are examples of the effective integration of computer applications into the science curriculum. In larger, mixed ability groups, especially on GCSE courses, there is less effective teaching and learning. Little consideration is given in these groups to the range of students' abilities and prior learning, and consequently the teaching style is not always matched to students' needs. In some sessions time is wasted by students arriving late. In others unclear verbal instructions are given at the start of the session, notes are copied from the board and classes conclude five or 10 minutes early. Homework is set regularly but sufficient care is not always given to communicating clear instructions to students. Little training is evident in safety techniques during practical classes.

39   Information technology sessions are usually well planned and there is an appropriate mix of theory and practical sessions. Lessons include references to text books as well as the use of appropriate high-quality handouts. Effective use is made of question and answer techniques to check and reinforce learning. The practical tasks set are appropriate to the topic and staff provide good support. GCE A level students have few opportunities for group work or formal presentations to help the development of their communications skills. Mathematics programmes

are well organised and supported by the production of informative notes. The range of teaching and learning styles is limited and students are not often encouraged to take responsibility for their own studies. The prior experience and knowledge of students is not always explored and as a result the more able are not extended and the less able are not always supported adequately. Alternative teaching and learning strategies are needed to cope with the range of abilities, particularly in GCSE classes. Appropriate assessment takes place regularly and students benefit from the helpful feedback. High-quality written feedback is not found uniformly across the mathematics department.

40 Art and design lessons are well prepared. Staff are very able and teaching of a high order was observed. Skills in teaching practical design in workshops and studios are well developed. Staff refer to previous work and make their objectives clear. Students are aware of assessment criteria and receive helpful and relevant written responses to their work. A GCSE photography session was well constructed. Students listened attentively and could explain with precision what they were aiming to achieve. They were able to relate technical matters to the character of print. Staff and students are on friendly but not familiar terms. Students discuss work together in a constructive way and generally feel confident to ask questions. Students are able to explain the details of their work and to show how it relates to acquired skills and earlier work. There is limited development of seminar techniques, particularly on the GNVQ course. The staff appear ill at ease teaching in this mode and find it hard to initiate discussion.

41 In English, communications and theatre studies, teachers employ a range of techniques. Excellent use is made of drama and role-play to bring texts alive. Structured worksheets and handouts are used well to support students individually and to facilitate group work effectively. Video clips are used to illustrate and illuminate textual discussion. Student feedback on teaching and learning styles is sought and analysed. The teaching of Shakespeare is imaginative, stimulating and appealing to the students. For example, in a GCSE English language class on Romeo and Juliet, structured worksheets and appropriate video clips from a production of the play were used to introduce the theme of arranged marriages. Students of Asian ethnic origin in the group were able to use their cultural experience of arranged marriages to gain immediate empathy with the topic and the group's interest was firmly engaged. The objectives and structure of sessions, however, are not always made clear at the start. Schemes of work lack detail. There is no evidence of students planning their own work or analysing their needs in order to take responsibility for their personal progress. Students have limited opportunities to develop information technology skills within the department, although this is improving for GCSE students who now increasingly use wordprocessing.

42 In law, the teaching is systematically planned to deliver appropriate knowledge, train for examination success and assess achievement. There is effective communication, and shared planning and use of materials

within the law teaching team. Students' involvement and motivation is much higher in some groups than others and there is a marked variation in the extent to which the methods employed encourage students to analyse and evaluate. In sociology and psychology, there are some competent schemes of work, well-presented handouts which identify key words, concepts and jargon and very helpful workbooks on statistical methods. There is effective practical work and audio-visual aids are used appropriately. Teachers do not always use a variety of teaching methods and the lack of equipment in some rooms does not encourage their use. There are good examples of concentration on examination technique. In some classes students made few contributions but in others effective paired work was observed.

STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENTS

43   In 1994 the college's GCE A level pass rate at grades A-E was 75 per cent. The provisional national average for sixth form colleges was 83 per cent. This overall level of achievement reflects students' differing qualifications at entry. Of those students starting at the college in 1993-94 with four or more GCSE passes at grade C or above, 81 per cent obtained a pass with grades A-E. Of those students who started without such GCSE grades, 63 per cent obtained grade A-E passes. Students aged 16-18 who entered for two or more GCE A levels achieved an average points score per entry (where A=10, E=2) of 3.6. This places the college in the middle third of all colleges in the further education sector in the 1994 performance tables published by the Department for Education.

44   The college produces its own data on individual student achievement at GCE A level and AS using value-added measures which show the achievements relative to the student's entry qualifications. The college analysis of value-added performance shows that students achieve almost half a grade in excess of expectations. Results in art, law, business studies and sociology showed particularly high value-added scores.

45   In 1994, in GCSE the pass rate at grades A-C was 46 per cent, just below the national average of 50 per cent for sixth form colleges.

46   The GNVQ intermediate level was offered for the first time in 1993-94 in health and social care, and business. Of the 12 candidates on a one-year health and social care programme, four successfully completed the full award. In addition there are eight students undertaking this qualification over two years. Of 10 GNVQ students who completed the intermediate business course in June 1994, three achieved their qualification and three are continuing into a second year. The GNVQ portfolios of current students for business are not well organised. The work of GNVQ advanced art and design students varies greatly in standard. The poorest is of a low technical standard, displaying inadequate drawing skills and insensitivity to materials. GNVQ advanced students do not display a particularly sophisticated approach to art criticism and find it hard to set aside personal preferences in debating works of art.

47   GCE A level results in science subjects were near or above the national provisional average for 1994, except in human biology, where only 50 per cent gained passes. Achievements in GCSE single subject sciences were poor, with a 19 per cent pass rate in physics, 24 per cent in chemistry and 35 per cent in biology. However, in GCSE modular science 57 per cent of candidates gained grades A-C. Most science students are able to speak about their work clearly and with enthusiasm. GCE A level written work is generally of good quality but GCSE written work is often poor.

48   Mathematics students display both knowledge and understanding but they are developing only a limited range of skills. The level of students' achievements in mathematics is barely adequate; far too many students follow programmes that result in no worthwhile externally-accredited achievement. In 1994 the GCE A level mathematics pass rate at grades A-E was 58 per cent, with mathematics and statistics 67 per cent and statistics 81 per cent. This compares to a provisional national average for all ages of 82 per cent for mathematics in sixth form colleges. Retention rates on GCSE courses are high with 89 per cent of students completing the course. However, GCSE results are generally below national levels with 30 per cent of entrants achieving grades A-C. Many mathematics students are conscientious, and are able to speak about what they have done with knowledge and understanding. They are less able to apply this knowledge in new situations. They display competence in practical coursework activities but do not always see their relevance. Responses to internal assessments are generally at an appropriate standard.

49   GCSE results in computer studies show improvement over the last three years and the pass rate was significantly above the provisional national average of 53 per cent in sixth form colleges. At GCE A level in 1994, 71 per cent gained grades A-E compared with 92 per cent in 1992. The provisional national average for 1994 was 78 per cent in sixth form colleges. Students are able to participate in practical activities of an appropriate standard for the course of study. GCSE students are generally enthusiastic and the standard of their coursework is generally appropriate although some students have difficulty with modelling exercises.

50   In the business studies programme area students are encouraged to realise their full potential. The pass rate in GCE A level economics improved from 63 per cent in 1993 to 100 per cent in 1994. In contrast, the pass rate in GCE A level business studies fell from 82 per cent in 1993 to 62 per cent in 1994. The number of students taking the GCSE business studies examination is falling and the pass rates at grades A-C have fallen from 48 per cent in 1993 to 31 per cent in 1994. Students who undertake the world of finance course develop a range of work-related skills. GCE A level and GCSE students of business studies and economics generally have limited information technology competence.

51   Students undertaking English enjoy their studies and develop effective group work skills by participation in drama and role-play. Sixty-two per

cent of candidates entered for English at GCE A level achieved grades A-C passes in 1993, compared with 55 per cent in 1994. The provisional national average for sixth form colleges for 1994 is 53 per cent. The overall pass rate at grades A-E for GCE A level was 72 per cent in 1994 which gives a good correlation with estimated grades on entry but is below the provisional average for students of all ages in sixth form colleges of 89 per cent. Sixty-five per cent of students entering for GCSE English language in 1994 obtained grades A-C. Twenty-seven students, comprising 21 per cent of entries, did not improve their previous grades.

52   Students develop appropriate examination technique as part of their law studies and subsequently achieve good examination and test results. GCE A level results for 1993-94 showed an 85 per cent pass rate and over 40 per cent of candidates gained either grade A or B. Sixty per cent of this cohort achieved a grade higher than that predicted by their GCSE points on entry. Good essay and question planning is evident and the neatness and presentation of work is of a high standard. Core skills, however, are often poorly developed. In psychology and sociology students' files often contained examples of careful note taking. Students achieve very good examination results in GCE A level sociology with an 87 per cent pass rate in 1994. In GCE A level psychology there has been a decline in the pass rate in the last three years from 78 per cent in 1992 to 72 per cent in 1994. Precise national comparative data is not available but the provisional national average pass rate for sixth form colleges for social studies as a whole was 80 per cent in 1994.

53   In art and design courses the results in GCE A level examinations for 1994 were good with all nine candidates passing GCE A level art and all four passing GCE A level photography. There was a 93 per cent pass rate in graphics. These results compare with a provisional national average pass rate for sixth form colleges in art and design of 93 per cent. GCSE examinations results showed an improvement on the previous year with 87 per cent of candidates gaining grades A-C in art and 73 per cent gaining grades A-C in photography. Photography and graphics students are particularly aware of the objectives of their projects and understand the need to relate the various stages coherently if they are to complete their projects effectively. GCE A level art students speak intelligently about their essays and research. There is evidence of effective self-assessment by students, particularly in GCE A level graphics work. Some students complete commissioned projects as part of their course. Students are mostly technically aware and can discuss alternative methods and materials. Graphics students are literate in information technology, and can explain how systems and software operate. Art and design work is generally well presented. Even poorer work is systematically organised in folders. The overall impression is one of all students achieving a general competence and of the best producing work which is distinctly innovative.

54   The retention rate for students at the college between November 1993 and May 1994 was 93 per cent and this represents a slight improvement over 1992-93 when it was 92 per cent. This withdrawal rate of 7 per cent for 1993-94 compares with a national average of 6 per cent in sixth form colleges and over 9 per cent for all further education sector colleges.

55   The college undertakes a survey of student destinations. In 1994, 74 per cent of those students leaving after a GCE A level course went on to higher education. Five per cent were shown as having a job. Of those leaving after a GCSE or GNVQ course 32 per cent went on to a GCE A level or GNVQ advanced course, 31 per cent continued with GNVQ intermediate or GCSE studies and 11 per cent went on to another further education course. Nine per cent went into a job or training.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

56   The college charter is a substantial document containing a comprehensive list of service standards and targets for performance indicators. It was runner-up in the college charter competition organised by the Department for Education in 1994. The procedure for complaints is clearly outlined. There is a detailed action plan which outlines responsibility for monitoring and review of the charter standards but no timescale is attached. Responsibility for monitoring compliance to the service standards is mainly delegated to the individual departments and cross-college teams. Variations in approach mean that there are currently inconsistencies in monitoring. Many students found difficulty in understanding the purpose of the charter.

57   A comprehensive internal quality assessment report for 1994 contains analysis and evaluation under the headings of Council Circular 93/28, *Assessing Achievement*. The report incorporates information from individual departmental reports and a range of further evidence from various sources. It highlights particular strengths and outlines action points under each heading. The appendices give a summary of performance indicators, examination results and other information which has contributed to the overall judgements in the report. The report has been circulated to staff and presented to the governing body. Only some action points have a timescale and identification of responsibilities for their achievement. The inspection team found that, in broad terms, the findings reflected their own. Action points were sometimes related to fairly minor administrative detail and did not always identify the quality issues identified by the inspection team.

58   During 1994 the college developed a quality policy which was approved by the corporation and included as an integral part of the college's strategic plan. In their role as quality managers, two vice-principals liaise with middle managers who are responsible for quality measures and the production of quality assessment reports within their

department or area of responsibility. The first reports were completed in September 1994. Methods used to collect information for these reports are variable and implementation of procedures is at an early stage of development. There are service standards for all teaching departments but they are not yet in place for key non-teaching areas such as the college office and reception. Work is needed to refine performance indicators in the areas of guidance, counselling and tutorial support.

59   There are examples of good practice within college departments. Monitoring and evaluation includes departmental student questionnaires, detailed statistical analysis of indicators, observation of colleagues' teaching and the development of action plans. However, practice across departments varies and there is no consistency in methodology or in the presentation of quality indicators. Links with the centralised management information system are weak and some departmental heads produce their own data rather than use centrally collected statistics. Observation of teaching and learning is a rare occurrence. There is a general absence of any data on which to base performance indicators or service standards in the areas of learning resources and accommodation. Departmental strategic plans are required in addition to quality assessment reports, but there is no formal linkage between the two. Since the quality assurance procedures have not been in place for a full cycle no evaluation has yet taken place. This is planned for the end of the spring term 1995, with a full review of the system in the summer term 1995.

60   As part of the quality framework a value-added methodology has been developed to compare the qualifications on entry of each student with those achieved on leaving. Some departments use the analysis to inform action planning but it is insufficiently rigorous and consistent across the college. Value-added performance indicators are used to show individual, subject, department and whole college achievement in an alternative format to comparisons with national examination results. The college does not publish figures which clearly show examination results in relation to national averages or in terms of comparative performance to other sector colleges. Destination records are available for students who have left the college and they are related to GCSE qualifications on entry. Use of this data as part of the quality assurance system is underdeveloped.

61   Student views on a number of cross-college issues were formally collected for the first time in 1994 by means of a student survey. The results were presented to all staff and the corporation in the summer term. The methodology and some of the questioning techniques used need refinement. It is planned to revise the questionnaire by the end of the spring term 1995. Some individual departments have developed their own student evaluation questionnaires. In most areas detailed views on specific courses of study are gathered informally from students. There is no mechanism for input from student representatives to team meetings or course review meetings. Employer views or views from higher education

institutions on the college or particular courses are not collected in any systematic way.

62   There are meetings of departments and other cross-college teams but the frequency of these meetings is variable and quality matters are not always included as a regular agenda item. Minutes are taken in some departments, but there are often no action plans and no formal procedures for feedback to senior management. Meetings to discuss the outcomes of course review are also variable in style, content and recording. These range from two-day residential events to informal staff room gatherings.

63   There is a staff-development policy which identifies priorities. Departments and cross-curricular areas are asked for staff-development priorities on an annual basis. One of the vice-principals receives applications for staff development. Decisions are made by him, using the policy as a broad guide. There is no detailed plan for staff-development activities. A comprehensive budget for staff development is not identified. Funding is allocated from various sources. There is a budget of £6,500 to cover the costs of external training, courses, conferences and materials. Evaluation of staff-development activities is variable in its stringency. Staff are encouraged to comment on the value of the activity and disseminate outcomes to colleagues. In practice the evaluation and dissemination is often informal and oral. Such informal procedures limit the effectiveness of the management and monitoring of staff development.

64   A comprehensive staff handbook is produced to inform staff of responsibilities, procedures and resources. There is a staff induction programme for all newly-qualified teachers and teachers new to the college. Heads of department, who act as mentors, and other teachers provide a good level of structured support which is appreciated by new teachers. This is exemplified where newly-qualified teachers share teaching groups with more experienced teachers. The college does not currently have a staff-appraisal scheme in place. The quality assurance policy does not make any reference to the linkages between staff performance and staff development.

RESOURCES

Staffing

65   Teachers are generally well qualified. All teaching staff are graduates and have qualified teacher status. Twenty-seven per cent hold a higher degree. There are two instructors who are both qualified teachers and one is a registered general nurse. One teacher holds internal assessor and verifier awards and 12 others are working towards the awards. In order to support the development and delivery of GNVQ, the college has sought to appoint staff with relevant industrial experience. Six have recently held posts in industry or commerce. However, in some vocational areas few teachers have relevant industrial or commercial experience.

66   Women are well represented among the teaching staff in the college. Fifty-five per cent of the total staff, nine of the 17 heads of department and one of the three vice-principals are women. However, there are no teachers from minority ethnic groups although approximately 68 per cent of the student population are from such groups. There is an appropriate equal opportunities statement relating to the recruitment and appointment of staff but the college has not taken positive action to encourage applications for teaching posts from the minority ethnic groups. Since 1992-93 the student to staff ratio has increased from 11.7:1 to 15:1. There are sufficient teachers for the courses offered by the college and they are appropriately deployed. However, some departments are small and there is a danger of academic isolation for the teachers concerned.

67   There are 16 support staff of whom six are full-time. Four of the part-time posts have been created since incorporation. There is no qualified librarian and a member of the teaching staff acts as the library manager. He is supported by three part-time library assistants. In addition to the college resources technician, there are four other technicians who provide support for the science, art and design and computer departments.

Equipment/learning resources

68   Overall, the range and quality of the resources to support the curriculum are adequate. Some equipment in chemistry is old and needs replacing and there are shortages of some items such as glassware and electronic balances in biology and chemistry. In mathematics, there is a limited range of resources. By contrast, business has a good range of paper-based material, and in art and design the range, quality and quantity of consumable items and the equipment to support photography are good.

69   The college currently has 100 computer workstations which are available to students but only one-third are capable of running windows software. There are cross-college networks and a number of departments have developed their own networks and purchased stand-alone machines. There is a need for a more co-ordinated approach to information technology development. There is no central register of computer hardware and software. Equipment which has been replaced with more modern items is reallocated. The development of information technology equipment is a priority for capital expenditure for 1994-95. There is no costed replacement programme for capital equipment.

70   There are approximately 7,000 books in the library and 33 periodicals. In most subject areas these provide an adequate resource but there are weaknesses in art and design, where the range of books and periodicals is unsatisfactory, and in law where there are few periodicals. Departments maintain their own stock of books and video materials. There is no central record of these holdings and it is intended that these stocks will eventually be brought into the main library to improve their accessibility. The development of materials to support new learning styles, particularly those associated with GNVQ, is at an early stage . At present

there is one compact disk read-only memory (CD-ROM) workstation. Facilities for using the small collections of video and audio tapes are currently being developed. A computerised library management system has recently been installed. The library budget has been fixed at £3,300 since 1991 but has been increased to a more realistic level of £8,000 this year. Budgets are sensibly allocated to departments on the basis of the number of students and level of study.

Accommodation

71   The college occupies a substantial and attractive building dating from 1928. It is located approximately one mile from the city centre in an area largely occupied by buildings now used as commercial offices and by the University of Leicester. Externally, the building is in a good condition. There is only a small amount of flat roofing and this was being renovated at the time of the inspection. There is ample car parking and £25,000 per annum income is generated by letting a proportion to the city council. There is a programme of planned maintenance and the college has negotiated an appropriate service level agreement with the local authority for its implementation. There are three temporary classrooms, only two of which are used regularly. These are in good condition and adequately furnished and carpeted. Internally, corridors and other circulation areas are clean and decorated to a good standard. The careers centre is attractive and has facilities for private interviews. Classroom accommodation is being upgraded and most rooms are now carpeted and fitted with blinds. In many rooms, furniture is used flexibly to accommodate a variety of teaching and learning styles but a significant proportion is old and in need of replacement. Laboratories are generally satisfactory and two science areas have recently been refurbished to a high standard. Insufficient attention has been given to creating modern and appropriate computer rooms across the college. For example, the GNVQ computer room has been developed so that the accommodation can revert to its original purpose as a science laboratory if necessary. However, there is one room which houses modern equipment in an appropriate environment. Most classrooms and laboratories are of a satisfactory size but some are too small for the numbers of students using them. In many teaching areas there are relevant and stimulating wall displays which include students' work. There is also appropriate departmental display material in the corridors.

72   The library is small, circulation space is limited and the main area has seating for only about 20 students. There are no individual desks and this discourages independent study. The library is well used by students but there are no facilities for small group, tutorial, or other work. Library staff also lack office accommodation. Plans to upgrade and extend the library are in hand. Additional space has been made available by converting an adjacent room and this will accommodate new information technology resources giving access to an expanded CD-ROM database

stock and provide additional seating for about 20. Further expansion into another adjacent room is planned. Students have access to two study areas elsewhere in the college but they have no learning resources and one is used partly as a social area. Accommodation for the college's new client groups is poor. Higher education students have a tutorial room but it is small and poorly furnished. At present there is no separate accommodation for adult students. A room is being converted to provide study and social facilities for them.

73   The college has a satisfactory accommodation strategy and is seeking to improve facilities. Parts of the lower ground floor area have been adapted to create some spacious teaching areas and elsewhere in the college other adaptation has resulted in additional teaching and office space. There is a need to develop learning resources and facilities to support more independent learning.

74   There is no access for wheelchair users to any part of the college. Proposals for the installation of a lift and other access facilities have been costed but a decision on these had yet to be made at the time of the inspection. The attractive landscaped grounds of the college provide students with all-weather surfaced courts for tennis and other ball games. There are also two gymnasiums but they contain little recreational equipment apart from table tennis tables. The dining room has a traditional image with wood-strip flooring and refectory tables but a new servery area has recently been installed. Overall, the recreational facilities for students are satisfactory.

CONCLUSIONS AND ISSUES

75   The college provides a supportive environment for its students and is making progress towards its strategic objectives. Its particular strengths are:

- the effective marketing of a range of courses for post-16 school leavers involving close co-operation with feeder schools

- detailed information and guidance provided through a thorough recruitment and induction process

- the advice available from members of the corporation board

- the effective day-to-day operation of the college by senior managers who work well together as a team

- the good practice in teaching and learning in some curricular areas, which needs to be shared and encouraged in other areas

- well-qualified teaching staff

- an adequate range of equipment, and a commitment to the development of information technology.

76   If the college is to build upon its strengths and make further progress towards its mission it should:

- develop measures to attract and support adult students

- ensure that departmental plans are consistent in quality and are directly linked to the achievement of the college strategic plan

- develop a co-ordinated approach to core skills in communication, numeracy and information technology in all courses

- evaluate the revised tutorial programme

- promote student achievement by more rigorous and consistent use of value-added analysis across the college

- ensure consistency in the implementation of quality assurance procedures across the college

- plan the replacement of capital equipment

- develop study spaces and learning resources to support more independent learning

- improve access for wheelchair users.

FIGURES

Note: the information contained in the figures was provided by the college to the inspection team.
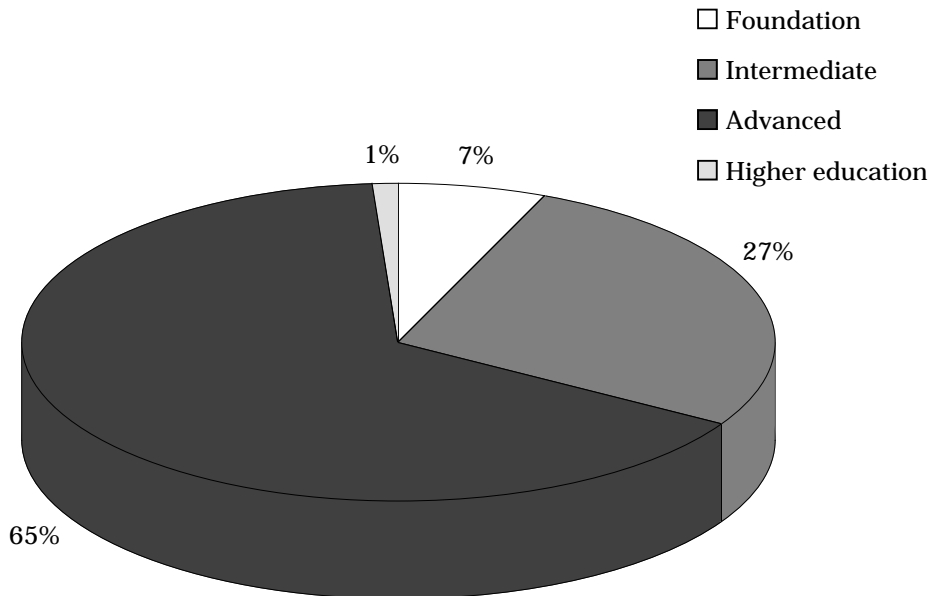
Figure 1

Wyggeston Collegiate Sixth Form College: percentage enrolments by age (as at November 1994)
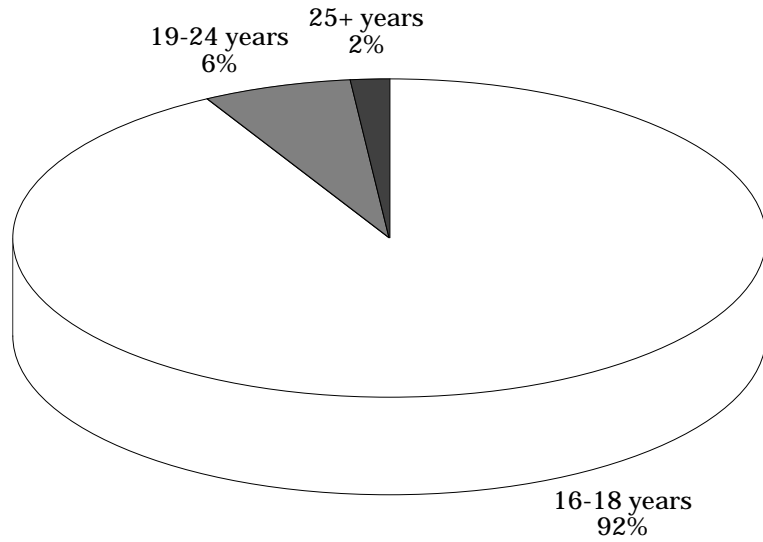
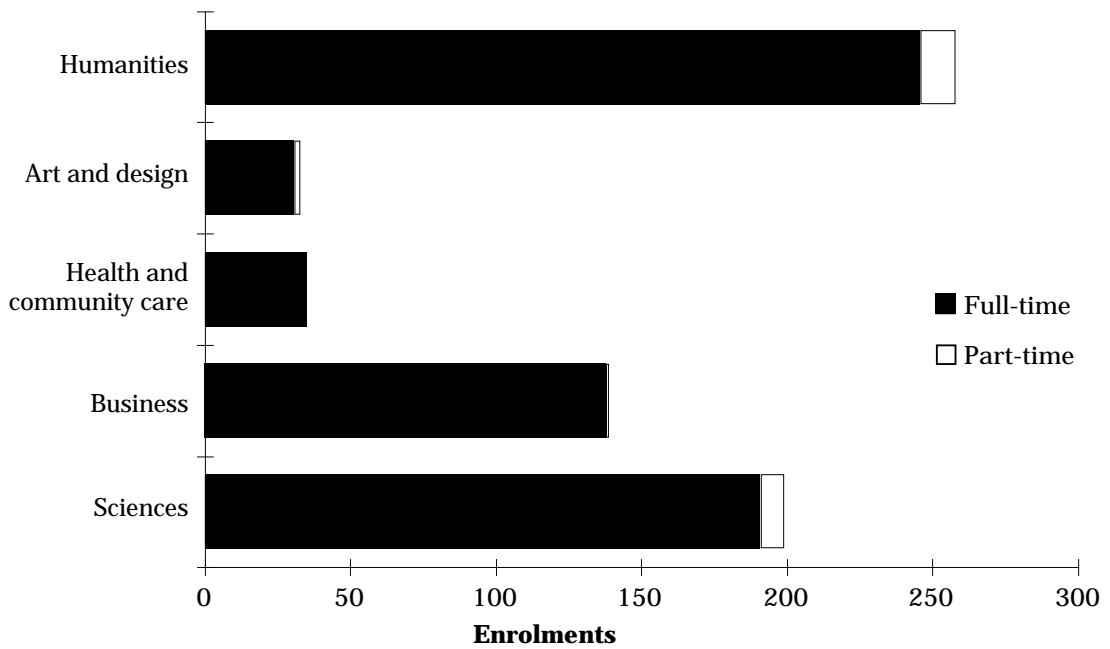Enrolments: 664

Figure 2

Wyggeston Collegiate Sixth Form College: percentage enrolments by level of study (as at November 1994)
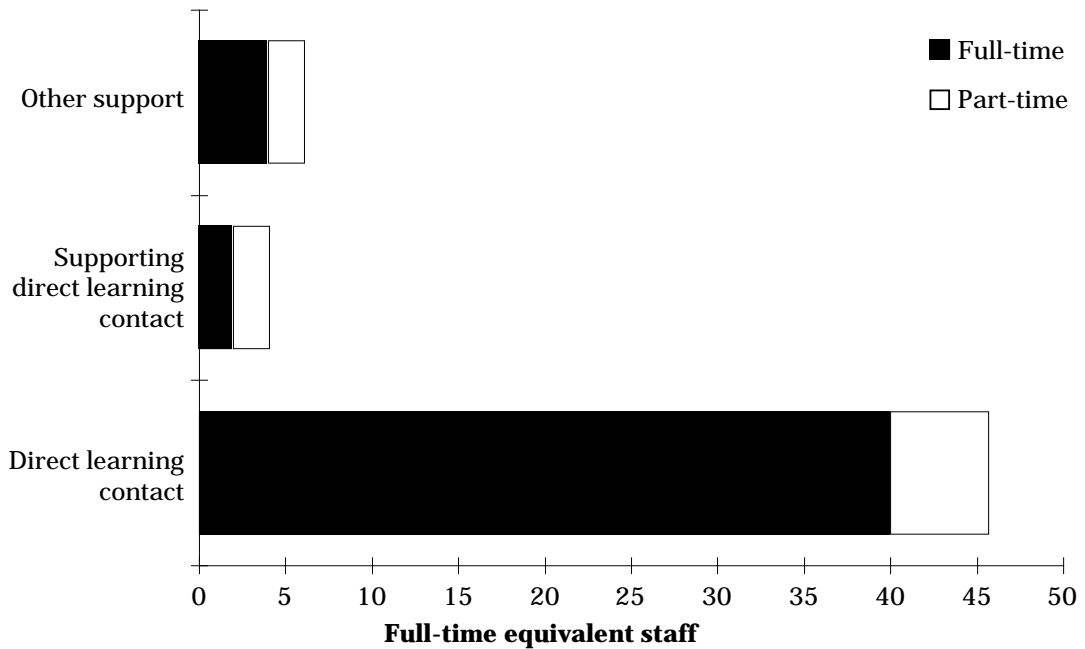

Enrolments: 664

Figure 3

Wyggeston Collegiate Sixth Form College: enrolments by mode of attendance and curriculum area (as at November 1994)

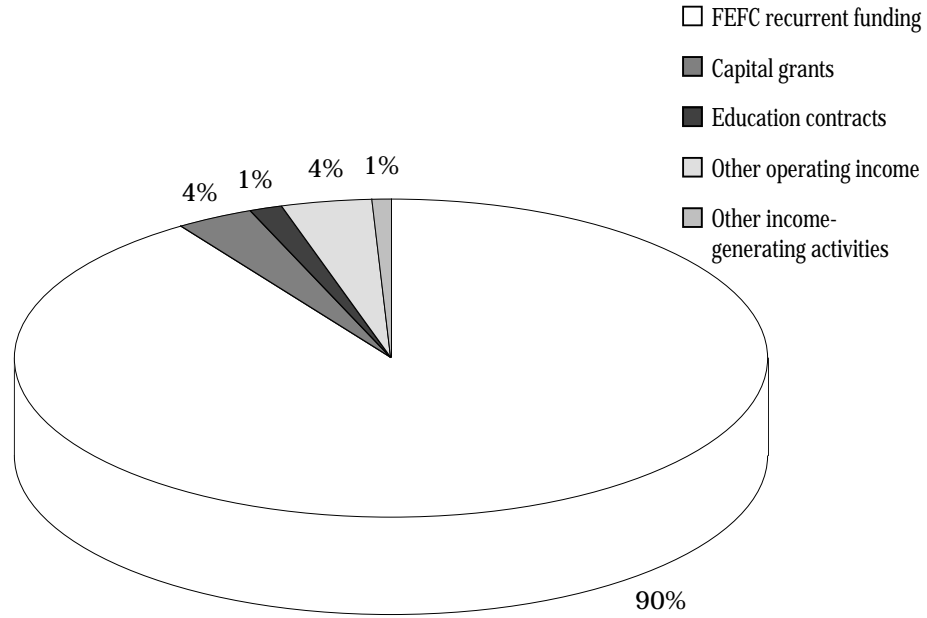Enrolments: 664

Figure 4

Wyggeston Collegiate Sixth Form College: staff profile – staff expressed as full-time equivalents (as at February 1994)

Full-time equivalent staff: 56

Figure 5

Wyggeston Collegiate Sixth Form College: income (for 16 months to July 1994)

☐ FEFC recurrent funding

◼ Capital grants

◼ Education contracts

☐ Other operating income

☐ Other income-
   generating activities

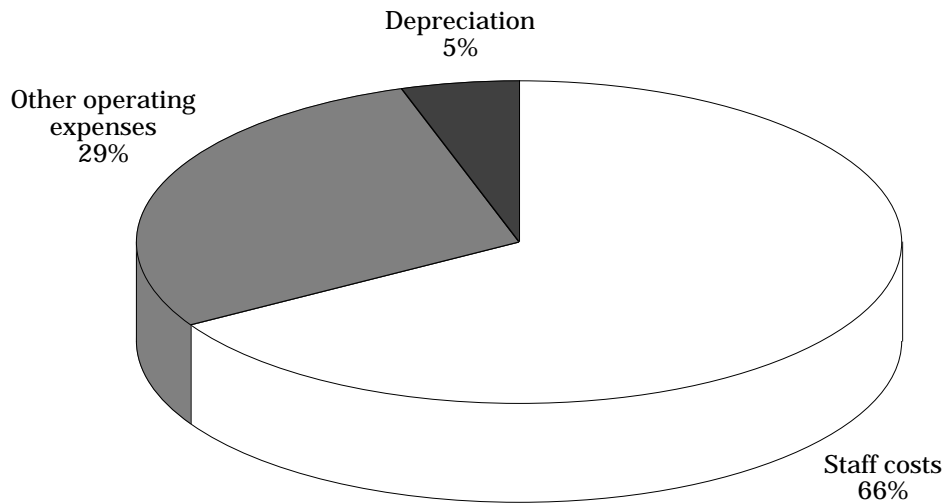4% 1%   4% 1%

90%

Income: £2,846,587   *Note:* this chart excludes £4,643 tuition fees.

Figure 6

Wyggeston Collegiate Sixth Form College: expenditure (for 16 months to July 1994)

Depreciation
5%

Other operating
expenses
29%

Staff costs
66%

Expenditure: £2,712,825