

**REPORT
FROM THE
INSPECTORATE**

South Tyneside College

October 1995

**THE
FURTHER
EDUCATION
FUNDING
COUNCIL**

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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 124/95

SOUTH TYNESIDE COLLEGE

NORTHERN REGION

Inspected January-June 1995

Summary

South Tyneside College is the only college of further education in South Tyneside, and, apart from one 11-18 school and the special schools, is the sole provider of post-16 education. It offers a wide range of provision including GCSE and GCE A level subjects, and a large number of vocational courses, using a variety of modes of delivery. Of particular note is the marine section. The college is the largest provider of merchant navy officer training in Britain. Members of the board of the corporation support the college enthusiastically and are aware of their strategic and monitoring roles. The college's strategic and operating plans are generated by a college-wide consultative process that the board oversees effectively. The management framework allows the college middle managers considerable autonomy while senior managers ensure accountability through effective controls. Arrangements for recruiting and enrolling students are good, and liaison with local schools is well organised. Support for students is generally caring and well delivered, though its quality varies between courses and faculties. There is much high-quality teaching, reflected in generally good retention rates and examination results. The quality assurance arrangements lack a coherent framework but the many components that exist are suitably managed and delivered. Staff are well qualified and have considerable relevant industrial or commercial experience. Some of the nautical science equipment is outstanding; equipment in other areas is generally satisfactory. Accommodation is generally good but parts of the college are underused while others are under considerable pressure.

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

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

Curriculum area	Grade	Curriculum area	Grade
Science, mathematics and computing	2	Care, beauty therapy and hairdressing	2
Marine and mechanical engineering	2	Art, design and performing arts	1
Electrical and electronic engineering	2	English	2
Nautical science	1	Other humanities	2
Business and secretarial	2	SLDD, adult basic education and ESOL students	2

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INTRODUCTION

1 South Tyneside College was inspected between January and June 1995, the college's enrolment and induction procedures having been inspected at the beginning of the autumn term 1994. Seven full-time and 11 part-time registered inspectors devoted 56 days to specialist subject inspections. Inspectors visited 238 classes, held meetings with college staff, and inspected a broad range of students' work. They also studied documents relating to the college and its courses. In the week beginning 5 June 1995, seven full-time and one part-time registered inspector spent a further 35 inspector days examining aspects of cross-college provision. During the period of the inspection meetings took place with governors, representatives from Tyneside Training and Enterprise Council (TEC), head teachers, local employers, parents, students, community representatives, cross-college managers, and teaching and support staff.

THE COLLEGE AND ITS AIMS

2 South Tyneside College is one of the largest colleges providing further and higher education in the north-east of England. Its main site, residential accommodation and administrative offices are at Westoe, about one mile south of South Shields town centre. The other major site is at Hebburn, about six miles from South Shields, and there is specialist marine provision on the River Tyne and at the mouth of the Tyne estuary. The college was founded in 1837 as the Marine School of South Shields by Dr Thomas Masterman Winterbottom, a local surgeon and polymath. The Marine and Technical College merged with Hebburn Technical College in 1984 and the newly-formed college became a tertiary college when the local authority reorganised its post-16 provision in 1989.

3 As well as serving the further education needs of its local area and the region, the college is one of four principal centres for marine education in the country. It attracts students from all parts of Britain and from about 40 countries around the world. It is the largest provider of merchant navy officer training in Britain. Officer cadet recruitment is healthy, and further modest growth is expected, though the size of the market is subject to the vagaries of world shipping economics. The new sea survival unit at the college's seamanship centre has given added impetus to the training it supplies to the offshore oil and gas industry. Recruitment to these courses remains healthy, despite competition from facilities on Teesside.

4 The college is situated in the metropolitan borough of South Tyneside, bounded to the north by the River Tyne and to the east by the North Sea. The borough extends to Gateshead in the west and Sunderland in the south. The area includes South Shields, Hebburn and Jarrow, and has a total population of around 160,000. In the last two decades the economy of South Tyneside has seen fundamental and widespread change. The decline of the traditional industries of shipbuilding and repair, steel-making, manufacturing, transport and coal mining has meant that

the area has the unenviable record of the highest unemployment rate in mainland Britain. In December 1994, this stood at 17.3 per cent of the workforce as a whole; the unemployment rate for men was 25 per cent. More than three-quarters of the jobs in South Tyneside are now in the service sector. Thirty-seven per cent of companies employ less than 26 employees. No major public limited company has its headquarters in the borough. The largest employer is the borough council: the second largest is the area health authority.

5 Secondary education is provided by ten 11-16 comprehensive schools, one 11-18 comprehensive school and five special schools. Most of the pupils who decide to continue in full-time education go to the college. There has been a modest growth in applications from school leavers in neighbouring boroughs. Within a 10-mile radius of the college there are a number of competing institutions: two tertiary colleges, three general further education colleges, and a sixth form college. A number of state and private schools in these surrounding authorities also provide post-16 general education. Recent approvals for new sixth forms in Gateshead will add to the competition. The proportion of South Tyneside's 16 year olds choosing to continue full-time education in September 1994 was low at 51 per cent. In the same year, 31 per cent of school leavers took up youth training places, compared with 11.7 per cent nationally. The predicted demographic trends for the area include a 20 per cent increase in the number of 16 year old school leavers over the next two years. Enrolments by age and level of study are shown in figures 1 and 2 and by mode of attendance and curriculum area in figure 3.

6 The college has a traditional faculty management structure supplemented by a number of cross-college functional units. The seven faculties deal with business and professional studies, creative arts and catering, electrical and electronic engineering, humanities and arts, marine and mechanical engineering, nautical science, and science and technology. The principal and two vice-principals form the principalship, and they are supported by the directors of administration and finance. This group, together with the seven heads of faculty and the four heads of the main cross-college units, make up the senior management team. Most key functions such as recruitment, marketing, programme delivery, staff development and quality assurance are not handled centrally but are devolved to the faculties. Each faculty is divided into departments comprising a number of course teams exercising responsibility for designated curriculum areas.

7 In 1994-95 the college employed 403 full-time equivalent teaching staff of whom 331 were full time. The corresponding figures for support staff were 258 full-time equivalent and 203 full time. A staff profile, with staff expressed as full-time equivalents, is shown in figure 4.

8 The college, in its mission statement, gives commitment to meet the needs of each of its students. The aims which the college has set itself include:

- expansion of education and training opportunities for the 16-plus age group
- enhancement of its marine provision
- support for the economic regeneration of the borough and the region
- development of a high-quality entitlement core curriculum
- securing equal opportunities for all
- development of the college's role in the community
- provision of high-quality courses through the development of effective self-assessment systems.

RESPONSIVENESS AND RANGE OF PROVISION

9 The college offers a range of education and training provision that is unique in the further education sector. It combines the role of a tertiary college meeting local and regional education and training needs with that of a specialist marine college serving local, national and international clients. Links with the shipping companies are very good. As the largest provider of professional marine training in the United Kingdom, the college delivers training for marine engineering and deck officers employed by the main shipping companies. The attendance of trainees in their company uniforms gives a distinctive flavour to the college. Company staff regularly visit the college to review the progress of their trainees, and this also provides the college with important labour market information.

10 In addition to its marine provision, the college offers a wide range of academic and vocational courses. The academic programme of study includes 36 subjects offered at General Certificate of Education advanced level (GCE A level) and 30 at General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) level. Most of these recruited successfully in 1994, but only two GCE advanced supplementary (AS) subjects are running. The GCE A level and GCSE programmes are available as full-time or part-time courses and in some cases on an open-learning basis. The college's vocational courses include General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQs) at advanced and intermediate level and National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) at levels 1 to 4 in eight occupational areas. Despite difficult labour market conditions, the college has been able to retain craft-level provision in both electrical and electronic engineering. It also continues to offer national diploma and certificate courses in areas that include engineering multi-skills training for specific companies.

11 An extensive range of access courses provides opportunities for adult students to go on to higher education. The college offers 13 courses linked with four universities. The general foundation access course and certificate in foundation studies courses are popular, but others, such as those in science and technology, have not recruited well. Teacher training courses are franchised from the University of Huddersfield and Sunderland

University and, unusually, include a full three-year Bachelor of Education course. The first year of the Bachelor of Science course in maritime technology is franchised from Plymouth University. Higher national certificates in business studies and computing are linked with the University of Northumbria at Newcastle.

12 The development of strong business partnerships and a large portfolio of profit-making courses is given a high priority by the college. Management and leadership development programmes are offered at NVQ level 4, and use is made of the college's extensive survival facilities for outward-bound simulation activities.

13 The college is involved in a number of curriculum initiatives linked with local schools, some supported by the TEC: for example, education business partnerships. The college has given support to schools in developing GNVQ units for the pre-16 curriculum. Effective links exist with local schools and some colleges outside the immediate locality; for example, the college is working with another college in Billingham on the development of open-learning materials.

14 Tyneside TEC considers the college to be progressive, open, and responsive to the local community. The principal represents local colleges on the Tyneside national targets for education and training forum that includes representatives from business and private training organisations. Staff are aware of the targets and many are involved in a number of related developments at national level, including the piloting of the modern apprenticeship scheme.

15 Links with many employers are well developed, and employers find the college responsive to their needs. For example, in 1993, with assistance from the Tyne and Wear Development Corporation, ONWA Electronics (UK) set up an electronics factory, as its European base, on a local reclaimed site. A workforce with technical skills was needed, so the college worked with ONWA, the local TEC and the Department of Employment to develop a tailor-made training programme for over 400 people, many of whom had not undertaken any education and training since leaving school. Of these over 70 per cent obtained full-time jobs with ONWA.

16 The industrial liaison unit has a key role in the college. It co-ordinates marketing, organises promotional events, and analyses labour market intelligence. The college's approach is low-key, relying primarily on the strength of its reputation locally and nationally. Each faculty has at least one advisory group with membership drawn from industry, commerce or the community; their contribution is valued. Faculties are given autonomy to develop their own links with industry, while keeping the central unit informed of developments. Companies appreciate having a specialist member of the teaching staff as their point of contact.

17 The college is committed to improving the recruitment of people from groups under-represented in further education, and staff have worked

hard to provide opportunities for the broadest possible range of students. Learning centres on both college sites attract local people and support existing students. Nearly 4,000 students attended both the Hebburn and South Shields learning centres from September to June 1995. Of these, 1,117 were students undertaking a programme individually designed to meet their particular requirements. The centres are open until 22.00 on weekdays and 15.00 on Saturdays. Since September 1994, the college has provided over 80 information technology sessions for community groups in schools, community centres, local churches and working men's clubs. This is seen as an important way to promote progression for adults. The college sponsors a considerable programme of non-schedule 2 courses delivered through a number of external institutions, and also offers a programme of its own.

18 The college commissioned staff from the Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Unit (ALBSU) to investigate local community needs for basic education. Two family literacy projects in Hebburn have been introduced in partnership with a local primary school and a social services centre to develop the basic skills of parents and their children. The college now provides advice and guidance on basic skills development on a consultancy basis to organisations in other parts of the country. Its provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is based in the faculty of creative arts and catering. The head of faculty acts as co-ordinator of the college's provision for these students. An employment preparation course is provided for full-time students who have moderate learning difficulties. Adult basic education is based in the faculty of humanities and arts. The department of continuing education provides courses in English as a second language and for speakers of other languages.

19 Although there is no systematic approach to developing overseas links, the international nature of much of its provision means that the college does a considerable amount of business throughout the world. It provides consultancy to government agencies, for example in India and the Philippines, to help them set up marine training facilities. The engineering faculties provide training for cruise ships' on-board systems. In partnership with the North of England Protecting and Indemnity Association, the college developed a course with particular emphasis on loss prevention. It now delivers the course to order, for example in Athens and Jakarta, and it is also available as a distance-learning package. The college has a limited programme of student and staff links with European countries. Language students, business studies students, and those on teacher training courses have taken part in student exchange programmes.

20 An equal opportunities policy has been developed and a working party has contributed to many developments across the college. For example, it has assessed access to the buildings for partially-sighted students and those who use wheelchairs. Students from overseas and from different ethnic cultures feel they are valued and fairly treated at the college.

GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

21 The interests and experience of the 18 members of the board of the corporation reflect the main activities of the college. There are 11 members from industry and commerce, including five who have current involvement in the maritime industry, and one nominated by Tyneside TEC. The other members are a nominee from the local community associations, a head teacher from a special school, the Director of Education for South Tyneside, two college staff, a member of the student association and the principal. A search committee has been set up to fill the two positions which are currently vacant. Three of the governors are women. The business governors bring expertise in finance, personnel and premises management that has been valuable to the college, for example in helping it select a software package for personnel management. The board's committees deal with finance, personnel, premises, audit and remuneration. Senior managers attend board and committee meetings and frequently present reports.

22 Governors are active and enthusiastic supporters of the college and the board has a distinct sense of its strategic and monitoring roles. The board's committees are in the process of planning their work programme for the coming academic year and have as an agenda item the evaluation of their own performance. They monitor the performance of the college through regular reports and presentations from senior managers. Board members are better known in the college than board members in many other institutions. Individual governors improve their understanding of the college through participation in college life; for example, they are members of the advisory groups for specific vocational areas. A joint students/corporation consultative committee has been set up to enable students to contribute more fully to decision making.

23 The style of leadership employed by the principalship encourages openness, flair, and delegation within a framework which ensures consistency in key matters. The principal and the two vice-principals each have their own responsibilities but work as a close team. The senior management team, which is predominantly male, has weekly meetings that are an effective channel for information and provide a focus for debate and the delegation of management tasks. Each faculty head has specific cross-college responsibilities in addition to the main role of leading a specialist academic unit. Full-cost provision is co-ordinated and monitored by the industrial liaison unit, but the responsibility for delivering the courses and corresponding with customers rests with the faculties. The principalship shows confidence in their staff by encouraging considerable autonomy. Individual staff lead and are held responsible for particular initiatives: for example, a number of projects to encourage women and school pupils to consider a career in engineering. High priority is given to safety matters in the college, under the management of a qualified and experienced cross-college group, and staff have been trained to take swift and effective action when safety is at risk.

24 Each faculty has a management team comprising its head and the heads of its departments. Management styles and modes of operation vary between faculties, but they are effective and lines of responsibility are well understood. Faculty management team meetings are usually held after each senior management team meeting. Whole-faculty and departmental meetings also take place regularly. The management of the teaching of the curriculum is good. Cross-college curriculum arrangements have been strengthened by the recent appointment of a curriculum manager. Course and programme teams meet regularly, though records of their meetings do not always identify action points or attach responsibility for action. Data on enrolments, completion and success rates and destinations after leaving are carefully collected at course level.

25 The college's strategic planning relates clearly to its mission and aims. The directors of finance and administration analyse resource implications and assist the principalship to produce the strategic plan for consideration by the board. Operating statements specify timescales and the managers responsible for monitoring and reporting on each strategic aim. Most faculties involve course managers in the planning process. Faculty plans are drawn up by the faculty management teams and presented to governors for approval.

26 The academic board is successful in promoting the academic development of the college. Its membership includes teaching staff, support staff and students. Staff at all levels consider it central to college operations. Its monthly meetings are conducted efficiently and effectively and are well attended. Currently 13 cross-college working groups or subcommittees report to the academic board. Each is chaired by a member of the principalship who makes regular presentations on its work to the full academic board. Three other cross-college groups report directly to the principalship; their subjects are health and safety, records of achievement, and education business partnerships.

27 Policy statements cover many aspects of the college's operations, such as personnel and health and safety, and guide many of the developments in the college. The policies are either monitored directly by the principal or by the academic board, and regular reports go to the governors. However, there are no consistent procedures for reviewing their effectiveness.

28 College managers use many performance indicators to monitor the college's performance and to meet the needs of external bodies such as the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC). Most faculty heads have developed their own computerised systems to assist with this work. A computerised information strategy for the college is being implemented. A fibre-optic network has been installed which handles separately the management and academic data. It links all blocks on the South Shields site but does not yet link the two main sites. The post of information system manager is currently being advertised. An additional administrative

assistant has been appointed to each faculty to manage faculty data. New software has been installed for maintaining student records and software packages have been purchased for personnel management and library management. As yet, there is no software to support the management of premises or the administration of examinations.

29 Members of the senior management team have delegated budgets that include staffing costs where appropriate. A finance package provides reliable and timely information to faculty heads, other senior managers and the board of corporation. Faculty management teams have authority to vire expenditure between certain budget headings. They understand their responsibilities and monitor closely their current financial position. Faculty plans include three-year capital replacement programmes. The average hourly cost of delivering the curriculum in each faculty has been calculated, and is increasingly used to determine budgets. The college's average level of funding for 1994-95 is recorded by the FEFC as £19.77 per unit, which represents an 8 per cent reduction on the previous year and compares with a national median for general further education and tertiary colleges of £18.17. The proportion of the college's income supplied by the FEFC is 64 per cent: close to the national average of 65 per cent. The college's estimated expenditure for the present year is £17.94 million. Summaries of the college's estimated income and expenditure for the 12 months to July 1995 are shown in figures 5 and 6.

STUDENTS' RECRUITMENT, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

30 The manager and four staff of the student services unit co-ordinate contacts with local schools, the production of information leaflets, applications and the enrolment of full-time students. They also arrange access to professional counselling for students and staff, as well as providing support for the tutorial framework and advice on careers and higher education.

31 Information for prospective students is available in a number of different forms. The college prospectus for 1995-96 is attractively presented; it lists the courses offered by each faculty and illustrates them with photographs which reflect positive images of age and gender. Supplementary information is provided in booklets produced by each faculty. All 16 year old pupils in the borough are sent a copy of 'Choice at 16+' which outlines the opportunities for full-time study at the college. Information about each course is organised around the level of study rather than a particular subject or vocational area, which makes it difficult for students to find information about the various courses offered within one area. There are also leaflets for each course, which are produced to a common format. Sixteen year old pupils also receive independent careers advice through interviews with careers service officers.

32 Liaison with the ten 11-16 schools in the borough is well organised. A member of the college staff links with a member of staff from each school

and arranges a programme of events. Schools receive regular information on their old pupils' progress, examination results and subsequent destinations. The schools consider the liaison arrangements to be responsive and effective. The college does not provide a programme of introductory or taster days for pupils in their last year at school. Links with the five special schools are strong. School heads meet with a senior member of the college staff each term. Informal links between school and college staff are good and are used to assist the smooth transfer of students to the college. The only link with the Roman Catholic 11-18 comprehensive school in the borough is through the careers service.

33 Arrangements for interviewing and enrolling full-time and part-time students are smooth and efficient. More than half of college enrolments take place outside the traditional September period; most of them are for part-time marine training courses, although an increasing number of adults now join open-learning and basic skills courses throughout the year. A number of part-time courses in engineering and management enrol students on employers' premises. Most full-time marine students are sponsored by shipping or offshore companies. Applications for some marine courses are received by satellite, direct from ships. Each faculty interviews students and makes offers of places. About two-thirds of all those who apply eventually enrol at the college; the college does not attempt to identify reasons for non-enrolment. Further advice and guidance is readily available for those students who need more information or time to make up their minds about which course to apply for. A small minority of students would have welcomed clearer careers guidance or advice on the possible combinations of subjects.

34 The induction of students to the college and their course is the responsibility of the faculty. The course tutor, who will be one of the group's teachers, delivers the induction programme using a checklist to guide activities. Some induction programmes last a few days, while others, for example the programme in health and social care, continue over several weeks. Many include advice on study skills and an introduction to the learning centre and to other support services such as the 18-place free nursery. On a minority of courses, programmes fail to provide students with an effective introduction to the library or to other general facilities, and some induction programmes do not deal adequately with the charter and policies of the college. The induction of students to part-time courses is more informal and more variable in quality, though tutors on these courses often adapt the induction checklist used for full-time students.

35 Tutorial support for all full-time students at the college is well organised and effectively delivered. The tutorial framework centres on the completion of individual action plans which contribute to the maintenance of the national records of achievement. Last year, more than 95 per cent of eligible students left with a completed record of achievement. The framework does not include opportunities to explore social, economic or political issues that often form part of tutorial programmes. Tutors on

GCE A level and GCSE courses meet regularly and activities are co-ordinated and monitored by a cross-college management group. Tutors on vocational courses meet only within faculties, which limits the opportunities for mutual support and the sharing of good practice. A few part-time courses, including access and marine courses, have a timetabled tutorial hour and support arrangements similar to those for full-time students. In other part-time courses lecturers work with, and provide tutorial support to, individual students while the rest of the group continues with workshop or practical activities. Most students receive appropriate individual support but the tutorial experience of students is not of a consistent standard across courses and faculties. Many tutors show a high level of care for individual student progress. Students' attendance is regularly monitored by tutors who quickly follow up reasons for absence. However, the resulting actions do not always improve attendance levels. Residential students are well supported by welfare and accommodation staff based in the hall of residence.

36 Support for individual students with specific mobility, sensory and other learning needs is sensitive and caring. Staff at the basic skills units at Hebburn and at South Shields sites co-ordinate and provide basic skills support to individual students and courses. The ALBSU screening programme has been carefully phased in over the last three years and will be used on most full-time courses from September 1995. An earlier pilot study revealed that about 38 per cent of full-time students needed some support in literacy or numeracy. In hairdressing and beauty therapy courses a delay in starting the support programme led to frustration and disappointment amongst students. Improved arrangements for providing support have been put in place for this year. Unit staff are working closely with vocational tutors to develop new vocational diagnostic assessments specific to the students' course of study.

37 Throughout the year, independent careers guidance is provided by two officers from South Tyneside Careers Service on regular visits to the college. They take part in the tutorial programme and are available to individual students and groups on request. Student services have developed a careers guidance pack of good quality which tutors use to help students seeking training, employment or places in further and higher education. Detailed financial and welfare advice for students is not generally available at the college; students are referred to the college registrar or to local authority welfare rights offices close to each main site. Two professionally-qualified and experienced counsellors have been appointed recently to develop counselling services for students and staff. Tutors are increasingly dealing with students' personal problems and many welcome the short introductory courses in counselling skills currently being piloted in two faculties.

38 The college has a policy for accrediting students' prior learning, but its implementation is not yet widespread. There is some good practice in areas such as business administration, electrical engineering, and nautical

science, where it has been used effectively to help individual students to make faster progress to an NVQ or higher national certificate.

39 All full-time vocational courses include experience on employers' premises or in a realistic working environment in the college, for periods which range from one to six weeks. Work experience is also offered to all full-time GCE and GCSE students during their first year at the college. In recent years, about three-quarters of them have been on a placement with a local employer. Students are carefully matched to placements, and record their achievements in their action plans.

TEACHING AND THE PROMOTION OF LEARNING

40 Inspectors observed a total of 238 teaching sessions. In 69 per cent of sessions strengths outweighed weaknesses; in only 4 per cent of sessions did the weaknesses outweigh the strengths. There were significantly more grades 1 and 2 awarded than was the average for college inspections during 1993-94. In the areas of mathematics and computing, engineering, nautical science, and art and design, all teaching sessions received a grade 3 or better. The following table shows the grades awarded for the teaching sessions inspected.

Teaching sessions: inspection grades by programme of study

Programmes	Grade	1	2	3	4	5	Totals
GCE AS/A level		9	15	11	4	0	39
GCSE		5	6	3	1	0	15
GNVQ		3	8	11	0	1	23
NVQ		0	17	5	2	0	24
Other*		38	63	34	2	0	137
Total		55	109	64	9	1	238

Note: other includes courses validated by: BTEC/Scottish Vocational Education Council, RSA Examinations Board (RSA), LCCI, City and Guilds of London Institute (C&G) and the Department of Transport.

41 Lecturers in all areas showed good knowledge and understanding of their subject. Their relationships with students were relaxed and friendly, encouraging them to respond and contribute to the lesson. Teaching schemes were used extensively but the quality of lesson plans varied considerably. In some areas, such as nautical science, plans were well structured and included details of the informal assessments and checks to be made on learning. In the best practice, they were shared with students so that the aims and objectives for the session were well understood. Plans for sessions with students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities covered the development of personal and social skills as well as vocational skills. Some inadequate plans, however, amounted to no more than a list of topics or a diary entry, with no indication of appropriate activities or teaching methods.

42 Most of the teaching in mathematics, computing and science subjects was successful in maintaining students' interest. Some sessions were exceptional. In a practical GCE A level class, students contributed to a lively discussion on the calculation required at the end of a complex chemical analysis. They showed a very high order of understanding and were able to argue and discuss their points cogently. In an excellent GCSE mathematics session, the lecturer used a carefully-prepared and structured teaching approach to guide the students' learning, asking well-directed questions to challenge them and engage their interest throughout the session. At the other extreme were a minority of sessions where the teaching was not stimulating and students were not sufficiently extended. In one GNVQ intermediate session, classroom control was inadequate and students were left largely to their own devices.

43 Engineering programmes of study were well constructed to develop skills and knowledge in a logical order. Additional tutorial support was provided in the evening for students who had failed units or needed extra help. On electrical engineering, cadet and senior marine courses, real industrial equipment was used to illustrate key points, and theory and practical work were well balanced. However, in courses in mechanical engineering, and fabrication and welding, learning aids were not sufficiently used to support learning, and assignments were not set regularly.

44 In nautical science, programmes of study were well designed to meet the needs of students and employers. In the delivery of the maritime technology course, to satisfy the requirements for the dual award of the Department of Transport and Scottish Vocational Education Council, teaching made very efficient use of resources, and was arranged to meet the needs of the marine industry for flexible working. Most of the teaching in this curriculum area was well paced and varied, and succeeded in extending the skills of students. Teaching designed to prepare students for the sea training phase of the course included an effective simulation exercise requiring students to work as a group to carry out the different roles on a ship's bridge. There was an appropriate brief for the exercise and excellent debriefing, which included critical analysis supported by self and peer-assessment. Lecturers used a range of techniques to ensure that students in groups of mixed abilities were all able to cope with the work. Records of progress were well maintained and monitored formally twice a term by the course team. Nearly all students were seconded from employment, and showed a high level of self-discipline. Careful monitoring, and regular reports to sponsoring shipping companies, ensured good behaviour and almost 100 per cent attendance. However, in a minority of sessions students were not given sufficient responsibility for their own learning, and some were in need of help to develop their note-taking skills.

45 Teachers on the business, management and secretarial courses were generally well prepared and sessions were lively, challenging and topical.

Lecturers maintained the continuity of learning by recalling principles from earlier lessons to shed light on new ideas as they were introduced. Audio-visual aids were not always well used in lessons; some overhead transparencies were unclear. In a few sessions, too much reliance was placed on taking notes and working mechanically through textbooks. In one class the lecturer talked without respite for 15 minutes, while students copied down graphs and notes. They were then required to make notes from textbooks for the remainder of the lesson.

46 Full-time GNVQ courses in health and the Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) national diplomas in nursery nursing, social care and health studies were all designed to encourage students to be active in asking questions and expressing their own ideas. A session to increase disability awareness was particularly well managed; the aims and objectives of the session were shared and appropriate teaching methods were used. Part-time courses were also taught in a highly-professional manner, characterised by small group work and attention to individuals. Students' work was displayed on walls, which made them feel that their work was valued, boosted their self-confidence, and encouraged them to develop further their presentational skills. However, materials and resources for this area of work were inadequate.

47 In hairdressing and beauty therapy lessons, the links between theory and practice were constantly reinforced. Students had their practical achievements carefully assessed by more than one member of staff. They understood the assessment procedures and the standards needed to achieve accreditation. A good supply of clients in the salons gave every student a taste of what real work would be like. There were some well-designed learning packs, but other learning aids such as handouts and overhead projector transparencies were not always of suitable quality. In one session an overhead transparency was projected onto a surface that made the image quite illegible. Safety in some of the teaching areas was not always up to the standards to which the college aspires.

48 Students on the BTEC national diploma in design and the GCE A level in art were well motivated, but those on the recently-introduced GNVQ course did not show the same level of interest and commitment. In some sessions good use was made of unusual materials and techniques, such as the vacuum-forming of plastics. With the co-operation of the construction section, three-dimensional work was well supported by the use of the carpentry and joinery workshop. Students demonstrated a wide range of presentation skills. Staff worked in teams to prepare briefs for projects, which gave the projects coherence, though in some cases the objectives and intended learning outcomes were not made sufficiently clear to students.

49 All the students on performing arts courses were well motivated, interested in their chosen subjects, and worked well. Lectures were appropriately demanding of students and were often lively and exciting;

they included clear explanations, constructive feedback and frequent checks on students' understanding. Student contributions were encouraged by staff and these were often thoughtful and pertinent. A variety of methods was used to maintain students' interest. For example one two-hour session ended with a quiz which helped to reinforce learning and enabled teachers to check on what had been learned.

50 The teaching on English and communication studies courses was in general well directed. The aims of lessons were shared with the students. Continuity from one session to the next was maintained by beginning with a brief revision of the previous lesson. Staff used question and answer techniques to provoke students into developing their own insights and to assess their progress. However, the teaching of some GCSE English classes did not always meet the differing needs of all students.

51 At least two lecturers were involved in teaching each full-time course in geography, history, government and politics, psychology and sociology. Staff taught different parts of the syllabus and worked together in the setting of assignments. Each subject operated a workshop facility to give students remedial help. Sessions were well prepared and staff made good use of students' own experiences and knowledge. In one of the poorer sessions, however, the lecturer had no lesson plan and became absorbed in the subject matter to the point of losing the students' attention.

52 Most lessons for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities used a variety of activities. There were opportunities for students to work individually, in pairs, or in small groups. In several sessions lecturers had devised worksheets for students which avoided an over-emphasis on written work. Lecturers had high expectations of their students and set tasks which were challenging and interesting. Staff used humour and praise to good effect, building up students' confidence and self-esteem. Students were given good opportunities to acquire vocational skills in workshops and simulated working environments. In a minority of sessions, however, lecturers did not set tasks which were pitched at the right level of ability for all of the students.

53 In all the classes leading to qualifications in English as a second language or for speakers of other languages, students were encouraged to practise speaking, reading, listening and writing. Under a partnership initiative between the college and Tyneside TEC, 34 students took part in a course leading to a certificate in bilingual studies. A number of employees from shipping companies enrolled in programmes for English for speakers of other languages. These programmes were well organised and well delivered, and were effective in motivating students and building their confidence.

STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENTS

54 Students in most classes apply themselves diligently and enjoy their work. Adult students on higher national certificates and access to higher

education courses are particularly well motivated. Students on other courses, including those in business, management, care, and performing arts, speak favourably of their experiences at the college. Some sponsoring employers select their students with care and guarantee employment to all marine cadets successful in their courses.

55 Assignments and other written work from students are of appropriate quality and in nautical science, standards are exceptionally high. Many other courses, including those in health and care and in performing arts, set challenging assignments that allow students to demonstrate good levels of understanding. Most of the work seen had been conscientiously marked, with helpful written comments from the lecturer. In some cases, considerable care is taken to involve different staff in moderating the work to ensure consistent grading. In some humanities subjects, however, the written feedback to students is less constructive and gives little guidance on how to improve.

56 The approaches used to support the development of the core skills of communication, numeracy and information technology vary across the college. In some cases, core skills are integrated within the main subjects studied on the course. In others there is separate support through additional classes or individual tuition from staff in the basic skills unit. Some staff, such as those who teach computing, do not routinely correct spelling errors. Attendance of full-time GNVQ students on additional English classes is low, and the dropout rate is high. Specialist staff teaching mathematics on approximately 14 other courses achieve good results from students. However, there continue to be students whose progress is limited by their lack of ability in basic mathematics. Staff in the learning centre assist students referred to them to improve their information technology skills. Many assignments are wordprocessed and some include printouts of computer-generated graphs. There are some areas, such as beauty therapy and hairdressing, where students are not confident with information technology and need further help and encouragement.

57 Practical work in science subjects is carried out safely and efficiently. Some students on the GNVQ advanced course in science have difficulty in concentrating during theory classes but cope well with the practical work. In nautical science, some of the practical programmes are particularly successful in developing team skills. Students on hairdressing and beauty therapy courses achieve high standards but their dress does not always reflect professional standards. Those studying art-related subjects work well in groups and show advanced technical skills. The use of groupwork to encourage student initiative and team spirit is not consistently developed in all areas of the curriculum.

58 The GCSE results for the college are better than the national average; 53 per cent of students were awarded grades A-C last year compared with the average for general further education and tertiary colleges of 48 per cent and for sixth form colleges of 49 per cent. Some of the results are

especially worthy of note: for example, the small numbers of students who took geology, German, music and physical education were all awarded grades A-C. Over 80 per cent of students in accounts, media studies and Spanish also gained A-C grades. Some courses were less successful on this measure: the corresponding percentages were 14 per cent in chemistry, 14 per cent in physics and 22 per cent in business studies. Seventeen per cent of those entered for GCSE examinations failed to turn up for their examinations.

59 In 1993-94, there were 918 entries for GCE A level examinations in 31 subjects; the overall pass rate was 76 per cent, compared with a 68 per cent provisional national average pass rate for further education colleges other than sixth form colleges. The average points score per candidate for those 16-18 year olds taking two or more subjects was 10.9 (where A=10, E=2) and the average points score per entry was 4.0. This places the college in the middle third of colleges in the further education sector on this performance measure, on the basis of the data in the 1994 performance tables published by the Department for Education. The average points score for those students taking three or more subjects was 13.9. A number of subjects with a small numbers of entries had 100 per cent pass rates. Other subjects, including biology, chemistry, physics, English, music, psychology and sports studies, achieved pass rates greater than 80 per cent. In only one subject, human biology, did results fall below a pass rate of 50 per cent. The pass rate for students at grades A-C was 37 per cent. This is just above the national average of 36 per cent for general further education colleges. The proportion of students successfully completing GCE A level subjects compared with those enrolled at the beginning of the two-year course was calculated for a selection of courses. Most had a completion rate of over 70 per cent; an exception was French with a completion rate of 56 per cent.

60 There were 9,935 entries for vocational examinations in 1994; of these 88 per cent were successful. The 38 full-time vocational courses had an average pass rate of 85 per cent. The school and college performance tables for 1994 issued by the Department for Education show that candidates aged 16-18 in their final year of study for GNVQ advanced, BTEC national or C&G national diploma achieved an 89 per cent pass rate which places the college in the top third of colleges in the further education sector on this performance measure. Courses with a 100 per cent pass rate included leisure studies, science, design, and maritime technology. It is difficult to determine the achievements in some vocational courses since the results are not notified to the college but communicated directly to the student. For example there are no official results for the senior marine qualification from the Department of Transport or Scottish Vocational Education Council. There were some notable results for higher education courses; the pass rate on Scottish Vocational Education Council higher national certificate in engineering course improved from 75 per cent in 1993 to 93 per cent in 1994.

61 Retention on the college's schedule 2 courses is high at 92 per cent. There are a few areas where the retention rate is poor. It is at its worst on one-year full-time courses such as GNVQ intermediate and GCSE courses; for example, the rate for GNVQ intermediate in design is 42 per cent, in leisure studies it is 60 per cent, and in GCSE subjects it averages 66 per cent.

62 Students studying for the Pitmans qualifications in English for speakers of other languages were very successful, with only one student, an external candidate, failing. All eight of the ATC/Mencap students entering for the C&G communications certificate were successful. Destinations data supplied by the college on students from the employment preparation programme indicate that many have made significant progress. Four of them successfully entered C&G cookery examinations and some went on to higher education or employment. For example, a student with moderate learning difficulties from a special school achieved a BTEC first diploma, then a national diploma, and is now studying for a higher national diploma in fashion at a higher education college. Students in some classes were enrolled on programmes of study which were beyond their ability, and they were unlikely to succeed.

63 Of the students who completed full-time vocational courses in 1994 and replied to the request for information on destinations, 63 per cent went on to courses in further or higher education and 29 per cent entered employment. The last analysis of destinations for the whole college was carried out by the local careers service for the year 1992-93. It showed that 56 per cent of vocational students at intermediate level continued with training or education, and that of vocational students at advanced level 74 per cent went on to further study or training and 13 per cent went into employment.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

64 The college's self-assessment report, which follows the headings of Council Circular 93/28, *Assessing Achievement*, is succinct, helpful and honest. Its production was independent of the college's quality assurance procedures. Members of the senior management team were given responsibility for reporting under inspection headings and they set up working groups to help in the task. The reports produced by the groups were then considered at all levels within the college, including the governors. The final synoptic report identified strengths and weaknesses, and the college produced, for its own benefit, a further, more substantial document identifying supporting evidence. The college's views of its strengths and weaknesses are mainly the same as those of the inspectors, though the report was critical of some areas which inspectors considered to be strong. The report and its initial presentation provided an effective context for the inspection.

65 The college places a high priority on the development of a coherent approach to assuring quality across the college, and the principal himself

takes a lead in that development. Each member of the senior management team has an assigned responsibility for ensuring quality. Governors are supportive of quality initiatives and play an active role in monitoring and reviewing procedures. Staff understand the application of the quality systems within the college and take their individual responsibilities seriously.

66 Many interlocking and effective processes for assuring quality are already in operation, but senior staff recognise that they need to be integrated within a coherent framework. This will take the form of a college quality procedures manual containing a common core of quality systems and procedures to be extended by each faculty to meet their particular needs. The draft of this manual which is currently being piloted builds upon existing good practice and experience of an earlier trial.

67 The college achieved the quality standard, British Standard (BS) 5750, for its full-cost provision in February 1993, and has subsequently been re-accredited with the revised European standard, ISO 9002. Since every faculty contributes to the commercial activity of the college, the effects of ISO 9002 are widespread. It was decided that it would be good practice for the college to attempt to meet the quality standard's accommodation requirements in all the college's rooms, despite the fact that many of them would not be used by courses covered by ISO 9002. Staff support the standard and have participated in a programme of staff development on its application. Many staff are trained as auditors. The college also operates systems of quality assurance and internal verification which build on the demands of external bodies such as BTEC, ALBSU and the universities.

68 Statistical information is gathered and used at every level within the college. The data are collated at faculty level, and the principal produces regular annual reports which are presented to the governors and are available throughout the college. These include performance indicators that are used to inform decisions at course, department, faculty and college level. The principal and heads of faculty ensure that action is taken on issues of concern. The governors often ask for more information, and discuss reports in detail with heads of faculty. There are some inconsistencies in the collection and recording of quantitative data at course level.

69 Rigorous curriculum review mechanisms are in place. Course teams meet regularly to review progress and evaluate their provision. Representatives of external agencies such as employers, social services and community organisations attend meetings for the review of programmes. Staff from other faculties participate as internal moderators. Reports and action plans are produced and these are monitored at faculty and college levels. There are a few instances where monitoring has not led to improvements and there is some reliance on informal methods of response. The principal conducts college-wide surveys of designated programmes, identifies issues of concern, and reviews all moderators'

reports. A college review panel meets twice a year, chaired by a vice-principal, to consider moderator, verifier and course evaluation reports for each BTEC programme area.

70 The college uses students' entry qualifications to predict their achievements and monitors progress towards these predictions on general education and some vocational courses. This is being extended to other vocational areas through involvement in a Further Education Development Agency project. The information provided is used to identify areas of concern and achievement within the college. There are, as yet, no mechanisms that will allow comparisons with other institutions.

71 Twice a year all full-time students complete questionnaires about their courses and their perceptions of the college, but the questionnaires are not standardised across the college. Questionnaires are also addressed to some employers and many part-time students. There are frequent opportunities for students to meet with college staff to raise matters of concern: through the course review teams, the student/corporation consultative committee, and in tutorials. Students in each year of the electrical engineering faculty meet twice a year without staff to make their own evaluation of the course, which they then discuss with course managers, who take the points raised by students forward to course team meetings. Students report that their comments are taken seriously and that action results. They cite as an example a reduction in the workload on some GNVQ programmes. The student charter gives details of the college's complaints procedures which directs complaints through the faculties. There is no formal monitoring of complaints at governor level.

72 As part of its monitoring of curriculum quality, the college worked with the advisory service of the local education authority to conduct observations of classroom practice. This process was temporarily suspended during the time of the inspection. It is planned to start it again with the participation of staff from the college's department of education and training. Members of this department have produced checklists to guide classroom observations. First to be observed will be those areas of the college which have not been the subject of recent monitoring, such as catering and leisure courses.

73 The policies and procedures for staff development are well understood and opportunities are equally available to teaching and support staff. Activities are linked to the college's aims and objectives. Dissemination takes place within the faculties. In addition, faculties develop their own staff-development plans based on needs identified through course teams and interviews with individuals. The staff-development programme is monitored by a working party which reports to the academic board. A survey of staff needs has been undertaken to which over 79 per cent of all staff responded. The monitoring of staff-development activities in order to ensure that they meet institutional aims is not sufficiently rigorous. The current overall college budget for staff development is £60,000 which is 0.35 per cent of the total income.

This does not include any of the numerous activities provided by the college itself.

74 Staff are enthusiastic about the staff development available to them. Most full-time staff and 16 per cent of part-time staff have been involved in some staff-development activity since September 1994. Forty-two per cent of all full-time teachers have achieved or are working towards achieving Training and Development Lead Body assessor awards. There is considerable commitment to industrial secondment and commercial updating; 25 per cent of full-time teachers have taken part in a wide range of secondments. The introduction of formal appraisal has been slow, but a system is to be introduced for all staff in September 1995.

75 The induction programme for new staff has recently been revised. Sessions are now held each term and part-time members of staff are encouraged to attend, though the process is not uniform for all part-time staff. An informal system of mentorship, in which experienced staff pair with new staff, is now being formalised. The college is planning to seek accreditation for the Investors in People award though it has not yet committed itself to a timescale.

76 The college sees its charter as an important part of its quality assessment system. The charter booklet is comprehensive and meets the requirements of the Department for Education, though it is rather unwieldy. It is issued to all students and staff, but most of the students were unaware of its contents or implications. A summary of the charter's main headings is posted on college noticeboards, but they are not widely read. Student representatives and employers were consulted on the content of the charter, and students' views will be taken into account in the process of review and revision.

RESOURCES

Staffing

77 Staff work collaboratively, and teamwork is much in evidence. Teachers have appropriate academic, professional, and vocational qualifications. Seventy per cent of lecturers have degrees or equivalent professional qualifications. Academic staff in nautical science are fully-qualified master mariners. In total, the numbers of full-time and part-time teaching staff are adequate. In many areas good use is made of part-time teaching staff, who bring a wide range of experience. The fire-training centre is maintained by the college but staffed by the local fire service. The health and care sections use more than twice the college's target proportion of 15 per cent part-time teaching staff. Staff of the marine survival centre are all full time, which causes problems in handling variations in workload. Although most part-time staff feel part of a team and are involved in departmental activities, some feel isolated.

78 Support staff feel valued and many take the opportunity to join cross-college groups. They are appropriately qualified and their practical

expertise is often used to support teaching. Some staff are moved between the two main sites on a termly basis while others are timetabled to work part of the week on each of the sites. There are sufficient numbers of support staff in the college in total, but support in some areas is inadequate: for example in mathematics and computer studies. Support staff are sometimes inadequately managed and the lines of responsibility between subject areas are unclear. Technicians work effectively to maintain equipment. As the South Shields campus has residential accommodation, security staff are on duty for 24 hours. Support staff throughout the college are courteous and helpful to visitors.

Equipment/learning resources

79 The college's wide range of nautical science and marine engineering assets includes state of the art equipment, both operational and for simulation. A telecommunications area houses a wide range of up-to-date navigation and communications facilities. Much of the equipment has been donated to the college: for example a full-size, working Doxford marine engine. Workshops possess industrial machinery, some of which students can take apart and put together again.

80 The college's ship simulator provides realistic training in ship navigation and pilotage. It is out of date, but the college is planning to replace it and is exploring various avenues of funding. In mechanical engineering there are a number of old machines that are still serviceable and fit for purpose, but some will require replacement in the near future.

81 The college has worked with local regeneration and enterprise agencies to develop a £4.5 million offshore survival and fire-fighting training facility to simulate emergency conditions experienced when escaping from helicopters, offshore platforms, and ships. This facility includes a helicopter airframe simulator with related indoor water tank, inflatable life-rafts, diving equipment and a range of rigid lifeboats on the riverside. A facility close by has a smoke chamber for fire safety training that meets the needs of the marine offshore industry. This has also been recently refurbished to high standards but lacks changing rooms. A new riverside jetty is planned which will provide a deep water mooring for the college sea-going training vessel and a new emergency escape vehicle.

82 Other equipment is of high quality; for example, a care area at Hebburn with beds and lifting devices, a practice office equipped to professional standards, and a sound studio. Motor vehicle engineering has been enhanced by the provision of a rolling road and modern vehicles. Some areas are less well equipped. The hairdressing salon has equipment that is basic and outdated, and its consumables are inadequate in range and quantity.

83 Many classrooms are equipped with teaching equipment such as whiteboards and overhead projectors, but some rooms have only blackboards. Many classrooms are poorly furnished with desks and chairs that have passed their useful life. All faculties have a planned

three-year replacement policy. Where refurbishment has taken place it is to a high standard. Connections with local purchasing consortia have been maintained since incorporation and help the college to get value for money.

84 Textbooks and other resources such as teaching packs are generally adequate. Some subjects, such as health and care, have insufficient specialist texts for reference purposes, but they are being given priority in new acquisitions. There are large stocks of books in the faculties, but no centralised catalogue is available to library users. Collection of data on library usage is adequate at both sites. Library study places are not sufficient; only 114 places are available at South Shields and 28 at Hebburn. The compact disk read-only memory (CD-ROM) database facility at South Shields is poor, comprising 13 disks and only one player, and there is no facility at all at the Hebburn library.

85 An audit in 1989 resulted in a seven-year plan to upgrade the information technology facilities, which is being implemented under the management of a cross-college information technology committee and a specially-appointed co-ordinator. There is an effective strategy to standardise software and hardware wherever possible. Good-quality machines are increasingly available in drop-in centres on both main sites. The ratio of full-time equivalent students to computers in the college is more than 13.5:1, well above that expected in modern educational establishments. The new learning centre recently opened on the South Shields site has a network of personal computer workstations with scanning and printing facilities. The Hebburn site has a similar but smaller facility. A few older but still serviceable computers are in use, for example in a practice office. There is a service call-out agreement in case of system breakdown and a comprehensive tracking of both hardware and software. Several curriculum areas have their specialist information technology hardware and software, but the art and design department lacks computing facilities for advanced graphics work.

Accommodation

86 The seamanship and survival centre on the riverside in South Shields is outstanding. Its annexe has teaching rooms, a small conference room and a 70-seat lecture theatre. These facilities are highly regarded by the marine and off-shore industries, and used extensively for short-course provision. A small radar centre is well placed on the foreshore at the mouth of the River Tyne. Two demountables at South Shields house radar and ship's bridge simulators. The excellent planetarium at South Shields was provided for astro-navigation training, but it is now also used on a full-cost basis to support the delivery of parts of the national curriculum to about 20,000 schoolchildren a year from schools inside and outside the region.

87 To complement its two main sites, the college is working with other partners to develop an advice centre in South Shields which will also offer

information technology and basic skills training. Sites are well served by bus services, and the Tyneside Metro has a stop near the South Shields site and one directly opposite the proposed advice centre in the town. Five of the seven faculties have provision on both main sites, some duplicated and some not. Only students on catering or on hairdressing and beauty therapy courses have to attend classes on both Hebburn and South Shields sites, and all their classes are timetabled on the same site for any one day. Free transport is provided by the college between main sites at the beginning and end of each day.

88 The oldest buildings on both major sites date from the late 1950s; they are in reasonable condition and set within well-maintained grounds, including sports fields. Major refurbishment was carried out in 1989 for the tertiary reorganisation; this included new library facilities on both sites, a new science building at South Shields, and classroom refurbishment. Classrooms are allocated to faculties but are not always close to the associated practical facilities. For example, some of the hair and beauty teaching rooms are near the engineering workshops and away from their practical areas. Some art and design teaching areas are dispersed around the South Shields site. Many classrooms are light, airy and well decorated, but some provide uninspiring learning environments. These include some English classrooms lacking in visual stimulation, and other classrooms which have inflexible layouts.

89 Workshops, studios, corridors and practical areas are generally well cared for and appropriate for their purpose, but some are poorly lit, and in need of decoration. There is much duplication of facilities between sites: for example, each main site has kitchens and under-utilised engineering workshops. The hairdressing salons at both South Shields and Hebburn are well presented and spacious, but the beauty salons are small and unsuitable. The conversion of three workshops to a new learning centre on the South Shields site has provided excellent specialist computing accommodation on two floors, but two of the three teaching rooms it incorporates are cramped and stuffy. There are plans to relocate the library reception area to integrate it more effectively with the learning centre. The large main hall on the South Shields site is used for events and drama productions both by the college and by the local community.

90 The large proportion of highly-specialised accommodation makes efficient space utilisation difficult. Workshop accommodation is less well used than general teaching accommodation. The college sees most opportunity for expansion at Hebburn, but also has plans to convert an excess of workshop space at South Shields into classrooms, information technology, and art and design facilities, as funding allows.

91 Access for wheelchair users is good in most areas of the college. Induction loops have been installed in a number of areas to help those with hearing problems, and there are plans to extend them further. There are no specific facilities for students with visual impairment although the

Royal National Institute for the Blind has recently been asked for advice on what is needed.

92 The 350-bed hostel on the South Shields site is primarily for the trainee marine engineering and deck officers. The accommodation is elderly and basic, offering mainly two-berth rooms that are clean and tidy but cramped. The hostel is noisy in the evenings, so that most residents wanting to work use the learning centre. Consideration is being given to improve the hostel accommodation by providing more single rooms with en-suite facilities.

93 The Hebburn site has better refectory and sports facilities than South Shields but its library facilities are poor, and it is less popular with students. The reception area is often empty and unwelcoming. The refectory at the South Shields site also serves as the main common room and is crowded at midday. In a separate building, the South Shields site has a cheerful and busy social club operated by the student union and subsidised by the college. Students have concessions to use a sports and leisure centre which is about one-and-a-half miles from the South Shields site. The counselling rooms on both sites are well furnished and placed discreetly away from public areas.

94 The college's accommodation strategy was produced by consultants and endorsed by the premises committee; it is not cross-referenced to the strategic plan. The premises committee monitors progress on issues identified in the accommodation strategy. Site management is handled by a building and estates manager, supported by a building officer and a team of caretakers. General cleanliness is excellent, helped by the recent successful introduction of a no smoking policy. Some of the machine workshops are kept to a particularly high standard. The college is working with consultants to develop a comprehensive planned maintenance programme.

CONCLUSIONS AND ISSUES

95 The college has made much progress in achieving its mission. Its strengths are:

- a unique breadth and successful mix of tertiary and marine provision to meet local, national and international needs
- responsiveness to the needs of the local community and employers
- an effective and enthusiastic governing body which has a clear picture of its strategic and monitoring role
- a style of leadership that is enabling and which harnesses staff energies
- good liaison with local schools and effective arrangements for interviewing and enrolling students
- tutorial support for full-time students which includes the widespread use of individual action plans and national records of achievement

-
- successful teaching which involves an appropriate variety of approaches
 - students' high levels of achievement in many areas of provision
 - the many effective processes for assuring quality
 - outstanding facilities and equipment particularly for training marine and engineering students
 - well-qualified and appropriately experienced staff.

96 If the college is to maintain and improve the quality of its provision it should address:

- inadequacies in the college's computerised management information system
- the variable induction and tutorial experiences of students on different courses
- poor retention and pass rates for students on a small number of vocational and GCSE repeat courses
- the lack of a coherent framework to ensure consistency in quality assurance practice
- the slow progress in implementing a staff-appraisal system
- the under utilisation of some accommodation while other areas are under great pressure
- some obsolete, outdated or poor specialist equipment.

FIGURES

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- 1 Percentage enrolments by age (as at May 1995)

 - 2 Percentage enrolments by level of study (as at May 1995)

 - 3 Enrolments by mode of attendance and curriculum area
(as at May 1995)

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

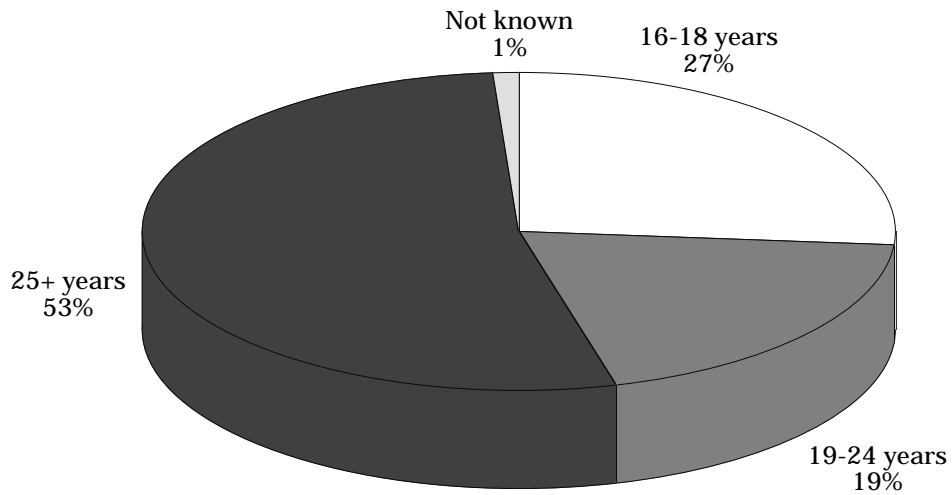
 - 5 Estimated income (for 12 months to July 1995)

 - 6 Estimated expenditure (for 12 months to July 1995)

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

Figure 1

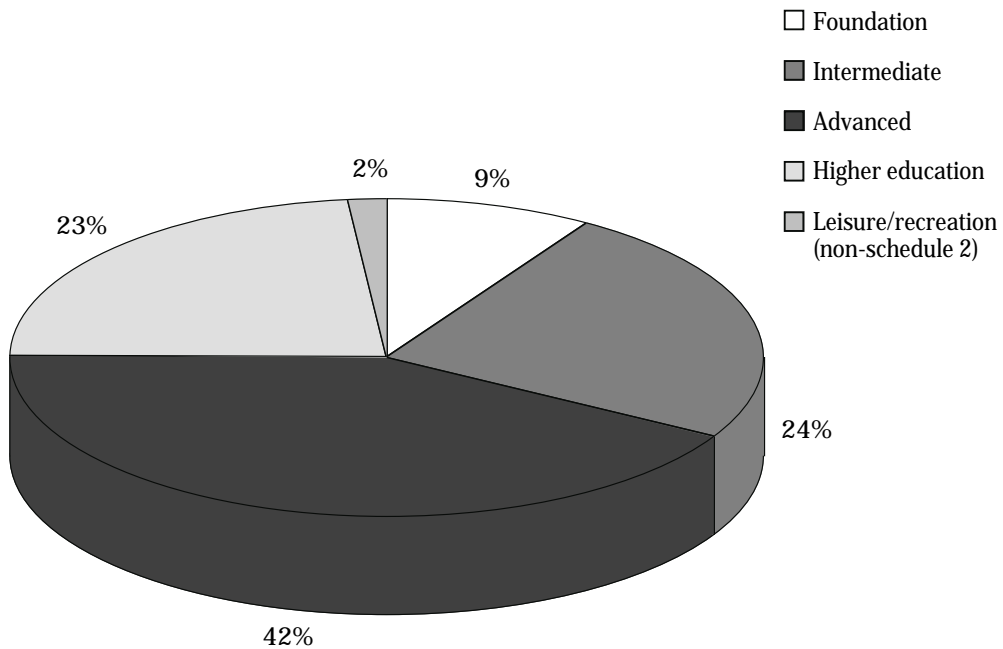
South Tyneside College: percentage enrolments by age (as at May 1995)



Enrolments: 19,128

Figure 2

South Tyneside College: percentage enrolments by level of study (as at May 1995)



Enrolments: 19,128

Figure 3

South Tyneside College: enrolments by mode of attendance and curriculum area (as at May 1995)

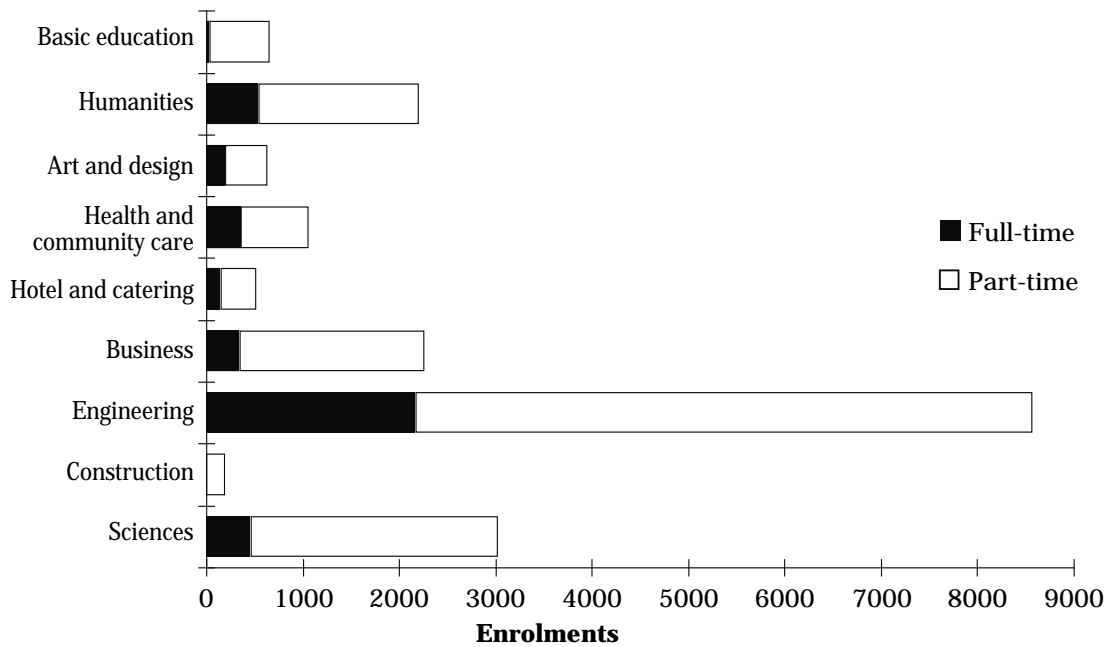


Figure 4

South Tyneside College: staff profile - staff expressed as full-time equivalents (1994-95)

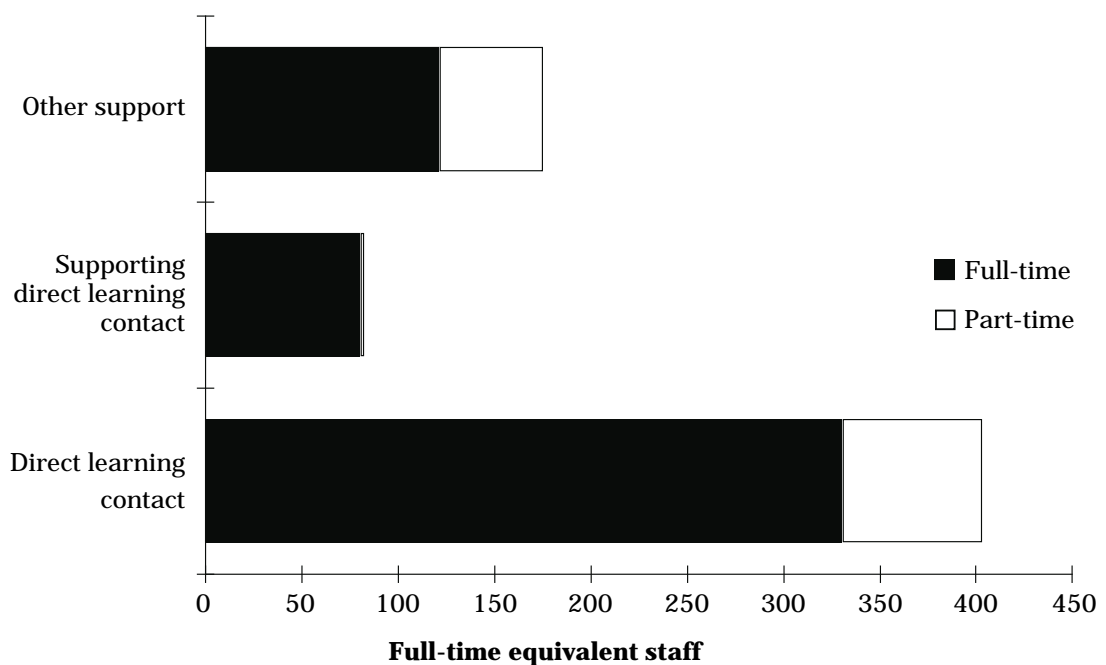
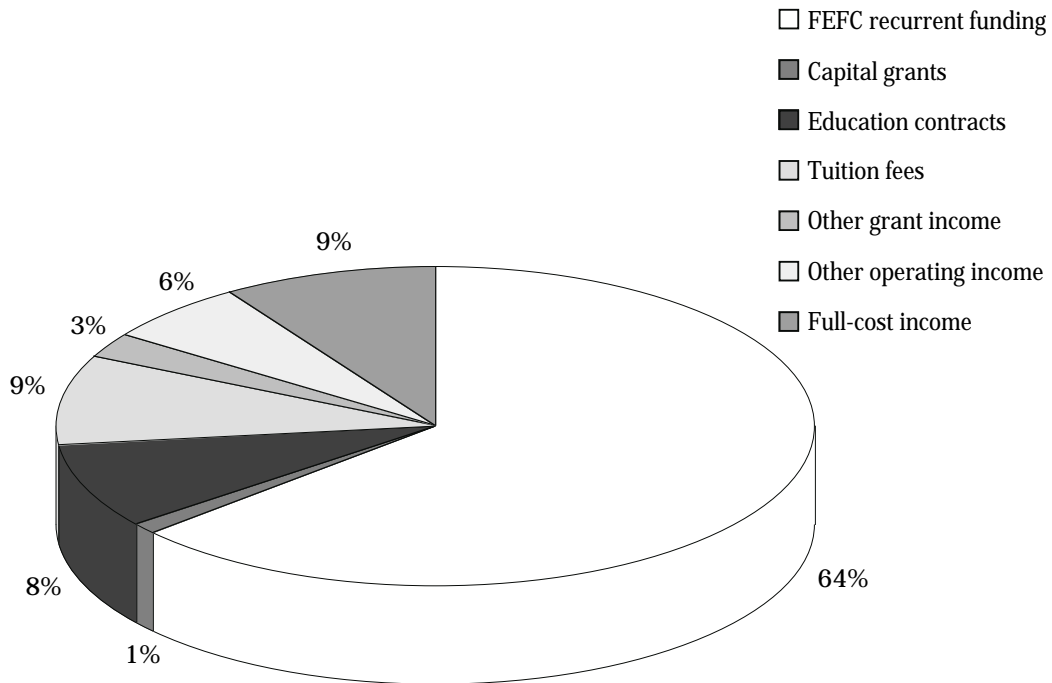


Figure 5

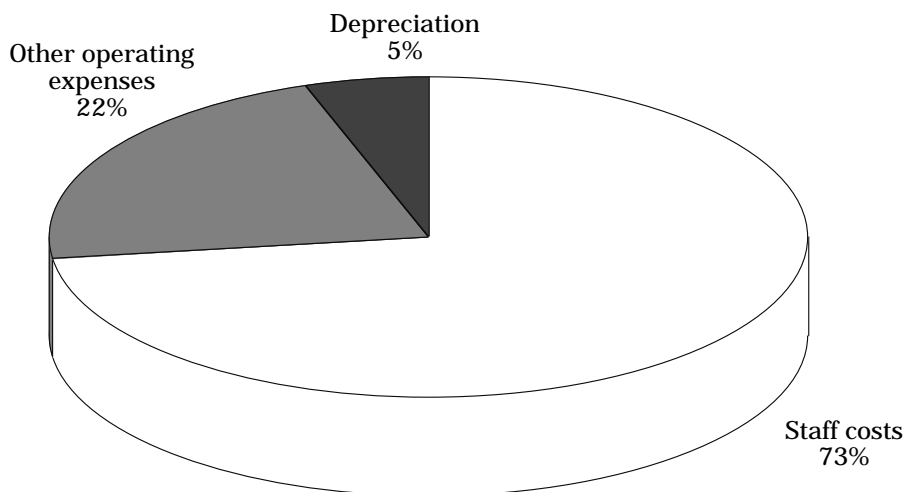
South Tyneside College: estimated income (for 12 months to July 1995)



Estimated income: £17,548,000

Figure 6

South Tyneside College: estimated expenditure (for 12 months to July 1995)



Estimated expenditure: £17,942,000

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