

**REPORT
FROM THE
INSPECTORATE**

Stanmore College

August 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 63/95

STANMORE COLLEGE

GREATER LONDON REGION

Inspected September 1994 - January 1995

Summary

Stanmore College is successfully recruiting students from within and beyond the boundaries of the London Borough of Harrow and has broadened the range of courses it offers. The number of part-time vocational courses has increased rapidly. The college is responding to the pressure on accommodation resulting from rising enrolments by seeking additional accommodation on a separate site. There are good links with parents and with the local community. Teachers are well qualified and there is good support from non-teaching staff. Relations with students are firm but friendly and conducive to learning. There is excellent support for students with physical disabilities and with dyslexia. Students on vocational courses achieve good examination results, but the retention rates and examination results on some GCE and GCSE courses are poor. The college is well governed and well managed and there are clear procedures for strategic planning which involve all staff. However, the quality of course management is not consistent and communication systems for staff are not as effective as they might be. The college should: ensure that its management information systems provide adequate support for staff in managing their teaching; strengthen its links with the local TEC; ensure that the good, well-documented quality assurance systems are implemented consistently; improve attendance at tutorial sessions and strengthen the monitoring of arrangements for students' guidance and support; improve the quality of the pre-vocational bridging course; and ensure that staff receive the training necessary to deliver the vocational curriculum.

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

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

Curriculum area	Grade	Curriculum area	Grade
Science	3	Art and design, media,	
Mathematics	3	performing arts	2
Business and finance	2	English and languages	2
		Social sciences	3
Nursery nursing, health and social care	2	SLDD	4
		ESOL and basic education	3

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INTRODUCTION

1 Stanmore Tertiary College was inspected in January 1995 when a team of six full-time and eight part-time inspectors spent a total of 61 days in the college. The enrolment, recruitment, initial guidance and induction procedures were inspected in September 1994. Teaching and learning and students' achievements in a range of vocational and non-vocational programmes were inspected in the week commencing 9 January 1995. Evidence from these inspections contributed to the subsequent inspection of cross-college aspects in the week commencing 23 January 1995. Inspectors observed approximately 1,600 students in 139 teaching and learning sessions. They also inspected students' written and practical work and examined students' files. They spoke to senior managers, teachers and support staff, governors, students, parents, the head teacher of a local school, a representative of local residents, a careers officer from Harrow Careers Service and representatives from the North West London Training and Enterprise Council (TEC) and the local education authority (LEA). They attended a governors' meeting, an open evening, other internal meetings and examined documentation provided by the college, including the college charter and the college's internal quality report.

THE COLLEGE AND ITS AIMS

2 Stanmore College, formerly named Elm Park College, is located in the London borough of Harrow and was established in September 1987 as part of a major reorganisation. All post-16 provision in the borough, including adult education, was placed into three tertiary colleges and one Roman Catholic sixth form college. Part-time non-vocational education, supported by the LEA, is delivered through a consortium of the three tertiary colleges. The four colleges continue to work together to promote the post-16 system and co-ordinate the entry of full-time students from the borough's high schools. The name of the college was changed on 1 January 1994 to facilitate closer identification with the local community. The former college was opened in 1969 as the first purpose-built sixth form college in the country and almost all the work has so far been on the single site in a pleasant residential area in Stanmore. As there was no room for expansion, however, a nearby site is sought to accommodate 300 extra full-time equivalent students, and in particular, part-time adults. This will also provide a more suitable centre for the activities of Stanmore Training Limited under which full-cost recovery programmes are operated.

3 Within Harrow there are 10 high schools which cater for pupils up to the age of 16. In 1994, about 81 per cent of all the borough high school leavers chose to continue their studies within Harrow and 12 per cent of leavers started a course of study at Stanmore College, providing 21.5 per cent of full-time enrolments. The geographical position of the college at the north-east corner of the borough places it within easy reach of the boroughs of Barnet and Brent, with good connections by London Underground. The number of students recruited from schools in these

and other boroughs now represent the majority of full-time enrolments. Currently, only 40 per cent of full-time students live in Harrow and 25 per cent are from Brent. Within this wider catchment area there are five general further education colleges, two sixth form colleges and several schools with sixth forms.

4 The population of Harrow is approximately 200,100. Within the college catchment area, 29 per cent of residents are from minority ethnic groups, compared with 26 per cent in the borough of Harrow. The largest single minority group is of Asian origin at 19 per cent. Figures provided by the college for 1993-94 show that the intake included 52 per cent of students from minority ethnic groups, including 26 per cent of Asian origin. The unemployment rate for the area in October 1994 was 9.2 per cent, with rates much higher than the average for people from minority ethnic groups. This includes unemployment of over 25 per cent in some parts of Brent. Sixty per cent of the jobs within north west London are held by local residents although nearly half the local working population commute for their employment to other parts of London. Over 90 per cent of the firms in the area employ fewer than 25 people, mainly in the service industries, notably retail, catering, distribution and business services. Overall there are substantial differences in the working profiles of residents in the north and south of the area, with Harrow containing more managers and members of professions and Brent more manual workers. There is more part-time working by both men and women than in London as a whole and this trend is predicted to increase.

5 At the time of the inspection there were 1,362 students enrolled on full-time courses at the college and 3,339 part time, giving 1,727 full-time equivalent enrolments. About 86 per cent of the full-time students were aged between 16 and 18 but most part-time students were older, so that overall, only 25 per cent of students were aged between 16 and 18. Enrolments by age and level of study are shown in figures 1 and 2. The curriculum is delivered by three faculties: mathematics, science and community education; languages, humanities and performing arts; and business, finance and legal studies. The students choose from a range of 50 General Certificate of Education advanced supplementary/advanced levels (GCE AS/A levels), 15 General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) subjects, an expanding range of General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) courses, and vocational courses which include early childhood education, caring skills, performing arts and media studies. Full-time enrolments have increased by 50 per cent since 1987, and the college exceeded its growth target of 8 per cent in 1993-94. The last two years have brought a rapid expansion in the range and scale of part-time vocational provision, and an increased share of the borough's provision of part-time, non-vocational education. In 1993, 55 per cent of full-time students were on vocational courses as opposed to GCSE and GCE AS/A level courses, while in 1994 this figure had risen to 68 per cent. Enrolments by mode of attendance and curriculum area are shown in figure 3. There

are 89 full-time and 17 part-time teaching staff, with a further 170 hourly-paid teachers. A staff profile, with staff expressed as full-time equivalents is shown in figure 4.

6 The college's mission statement stresses a commitment to providing high-quality education and training for 16-19 year olds, the community and business; to the achievement of excellence through the delivery of a curriculum which combines innovation with the best of traditional values; and to the provision of the support and care necessary to enable all students to reach their full potential.

RESPONSIVENESS AND RANGE OF PROVISION

7 Before incorporation, Harrow Borough Council encouraged collaboration between the four colleges over the provision of all post-16 education. This still exists to some degree, to the benefit of students. Each of the three tertiary colleges continues to specialise in certain areas of the curriculum, while more widely-sought courses are offered in all the centres. There are common arrangements for the recruitment and guidance of borough pupils. Relations with the LEA and borough high schools are good although the degree to which the latter are fostered varies across course teams. However, there is some evidence of Harrow students choosing out-borough schools with sixth forms where provision is considered more 'academic'. Patterns of collaboration across the borough are an undoubted strength; the joint marketing of courses and co-operation over the technical and vocational education initiative are good examples. However, the college now sees itself as increasingly orientated towards a geographical constituency which crosses borough boundaries.

8 The college offers a balance of provision for 16-19 year olds with an emphasis on vocational courses. In 1994, twice as many full-time students enrolled on vocational courses as opted for GCE A levels and GCSE, and the long-term future of offering such breadth in the existing range of GCE A levels is being reviewed. The college has responded to increased demand for part-time courses, and growth in this aspect of provision has enabled the college to meet its growth targets. The further development of part-time provision is a key element of plans for further expansion. Opportunities for open and flexible learning remain limited. In its planning, the college is guided by national targets for education and training.

9 The vocational courses offered have a solid core of five Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) national diploma programmes and GNVQs are being steadily phased in at all three levels. There are presently GNVQ courses in art and design, business, health and social care, leisure and tourism and science. A GNVQ 'taster' programme is planned for 1995-96 enabling students to develop core skills while sampling different vocational curriculum areas. A small number of National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) are offered in business administration and information technology.

10 Students choosing a GCE AS/A level programme have a choice of 33 GCE A level and 17 AS subjects. Students wishing to re-sit an examination by following a course which lasts one year are able to do so. Some choice of syllabus and mode of study is available in the more popular subjects. Core skills modules for GCE A level students, accredited by the RSA Examinations Board (RSA), are being piloted in each faculty, under a scheme funded jointly by the technical and vocational education initiative and the TEC. GCSE is offered in 15 subjects and there are opportunities for combining these with other courses. Students who apply for a GCSE programme are carefully counselled about alternative routes prior to enrolment.

11 The college offers a part-time evening access course in social science and social work. There is also a full-time general access course for mature students, accredited by the London Open College Federation in which students choose from a range of modules. Although neither course has guaranteed progression to a higher education institution, the college has good links with local universities and many students who successfully complete an access course do go on to higher education. There are plans to open up the access provision to students of English for speakers of other languages by providing additional modules with accreditation at level 1 by the London Open College Federation. The foundation year of a science degree is offered in collaboration with another borough college and Westminster University.

12 A non-vocational adult programme is run by a consortium of the three tertiary colleges with funding from Harrow LEA. In 1993-94, the college increased its share of the overall adult programme from 17 per cent to 23 per cent. One of the other tertiary colleges manages the adult basic education, and another has traditionally specialised in the provision of courses in English for speakers of other languages. Consequently, there is little provision in these two areas at Stanmore. There is one specially designed full-time course for 10 students with learning difficulties fed by a school link course.

13 There are some productive links with industry. In 1994, the college company, Stanmore Training, made a profit of £13,000 derived from work with about 20 Greater London business organisations, including London Underground and the London boroughs of Harrow and Brent. This income was covenanted to the college. The unit is also responsible for Training and Development Lead Body training. Twenty-four candidates have gained assessor awards and a further 67 are under training. As well as 40 members of college staff, the unit is training candidates from the London borough of Brent, local schools and Metroliner buses. However, links with employers are undeveloped in some areas of full-time provision, with the result that opportunities for curriculum enhancement are sometimes missed.

14 Relations between the North West London TEC and the college are variable. The secondment for one day a week of a senior lecturer, with

staff from other colleges in the TEC area, to promote NVQs to employers is enjoying success. The college's business training unit runs a small training programme for the North West London TEC, aimed at the long-term unemployed and women returners. It also receives a small amount of funding from the European Social Fund for similar initiatives. The TEC made the following points to inspectors. It considers that the senior managers have little awareness of, or commitment to, the Education Business Partnership although there has been involvement at operational level through the work experience co-ordinator and the college has given support to compact activities in schools. Relations between the TEC and senior management are cordial but when initiated by the college are usually focused on TEC-funded contract work. The TEC finds it difficult to engage the college in the wider strategic debate about work-related provision and considers that the senior staff seem insufficiently aware of the diverse requirements of industry. Consequently, relations between the TEC and the college are not as productive as they might be.

15 Good links have been established with parents through twice-termly meetings of the parents' association and initiatives such as an induction evening for parents of new students. The college watch group, made up of students, local residents, senior management and the police, monitors incidents involving students on and around the college campus. There is some minor involvement of the college in the local community. A group of students participated in the Harrow Multicultural Arts Festival and health and social care students have regular work placements in residential homes. However, this is an area where there is scope for development. The college has established links with three colleges in Canada with a view to sharing good practice and organising staff and student exchanges. Links with Europe remain to be developed.

16 The college has a commitment to enhance students' experience through enrichment activities. There is an extensive programme of sport and recreational activities offering a range of opportunities from rugby to yoga. The college has successful athletics, badminton, basketball, cricket and football teams. These activities are managed by one of the senior lecturers in student services, with a part-time teacher and contributions from six other staff. Attendance at enrichment sessions is not monitored but inspectors found them to be well attended and well resourced.

17 Marketing is the responsibility of a senior member of staff. Open evenings are held in borough schools in conjunction with the other Harrow colleges, senior staff visit the schools and 'taster' days are organised for potential students in the summer term. In addition to the joint publicity, the college has a newly-produced prospectus and a series of course leaflets which are well laid out and informative. Market research is conducted through internal surveys of student opinion and progression, and the business training unit has conducted a survey of employer training needs. The investigations have been supplemented by market research carried

out by staff in particular curriculum areas. In addition, information provided by the TEC is used to inform needs analysis. The college should improve the co-ordination of its market research activities to provide a more comprehensive basis for future planning. There is limited marketing of open learning or other opportunities for flexible use of the college's resources, such as the new media suite.

18 There is an active equal opportunities committee, chaired by a vice-principal, whose members are representative of the college community. College managers are invited to meet regularly with the group to discuss the promotion of the equal opportunities policy across the college. Staff conducting course reviews are required to identify course objectives for equal opportunities, to monitor them and report on them. The college's policy statement is widely distributed and makes clear the college's commitment to providing a safe, non-discriminatory environment for all students. It includes a disciplinary code of conduct.

GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

19 There are 19 members of the board of governors, including the principal and nine business members. The role of clerk to the governors is performed by the vice-principal responsible for administration, and the vice-principal responsible for policy and planning also attends. There are elected members of the support staff, the teaching staff and the students' association. The head of a Harrow high school, a nominee of the North West London TEC, a parent governor and a local councillor provide links with the community. The expertise of governors has been of help in the monitoring of expenditure, project management, and personnel and employment issues. The experience in early childhood education of one governor has been particularly beneficial to a related area of the vocational curriculum. A permanent search committee, established to identify suitable candidates for appointment to the governing body, is conscious of the need for an appropriate gender and ethnic mix. Six of the current members are women, of whom two are drawn from minority ethnic groups. The governors are clear about their responsibilities, supportive of the college and active on its behalf. However, the other commitments imposed by their professional lives often make it difficult for them to attend meetings, which are sometimes postponed or delayed because they are inquisate. The members of the board have not received any formal training for their roles.

20 The governing body meets twice a term. The college provides them with full and clearly-presented information on curriculum and strategic matters, such as examination results and subsequent action plans, accommodation strategy, and marketing initiatives. These are often considered within a national or local context. Governors also consider and agree all strategic documents, including the college charter and the internal quality assessment report. Decisions are generally arrived at by

consensus rather than by the casting of votes. Responsibility for the management of academic matters is devolved to the principal.

21 Every member of the board serves on at least one of its committees. These are audit, resources, planning, research and remuneration. A staff governor sits on the audit committee, and the chair of the resources committee, which has responsibility for financial matters, is invited to attend the audit committee meetings in order to facilitate communication between the two. While these arrangements are not contrary to the terms of Council Circular 92/07, which specifically identifies individuals who should not be members of the audit committee, the board should consider whether they are in line with the spirit of the Circular which highlights the need for an audit committee which is independent. The full board receives reports from each of the committees. Each assistant principal presents an annual report to the board, and individual staff are sometimes invited to attend full-board or committee meetings for specific items. The principal and vice-principals are frequently called upon to clarify points. A few governors attend open evenings and events such as dramatic or musical presentations.

22 The eight members of the senior management team are the principal, the two vice-principals, the director of finance and systems and the four assistant principals. Two of the team are women. Responsibilities are clearly allocated by the principal among the senior management team, which meets fortnightly. The vice-principal responsible for college services manages the entire support staff through a group of four directors. The other vice-principal is charged with the development, implementation and monitoring of policy and planning throughout all areas of the college, assisted by a director of planning and quality. Three assistant principals act as heads of the three faculties and a fourth manages the directorate of guidance and curriculum, which includes marketing, curriculum development, learning services, guidance and counselling. The combining of academic, financial and strategic issues within the management team is effective in fostering good collaboration based on a shared understanding of all important issues.

23 The three heads of faculty and the assistant principal responsible for guidance and curriculum meet weekly as a separate team to review curriculum matters. They provide the link between the teaching staff and senior management. Each faculty meets every six weeks. Management of the curriculum areas is devolved to 21 senior lecturers, each of whom is responsible for a group of course and programme managers within a defined subject area. These responsibilities extend to the management of the part-time vocational evening courses, which are co-ordinated within each faculty by one of the senior lecturers. Staff are clear about the lines of responsibility. There is a strong team identity within both faculties and course teams, and heads of faculty are able to create their own management styles and systems. Most course teams meet regularly and keep minutes of

their deliberations, although in some areas, where there are large numbers of hourly-paid lecturers in proportion to the full-time staff, meetings do not take place. Most full-time lecturers and senior lecturers are also tutors, supported by a senior tutor. However, the roles of many of the senior lecturers are not clearly defined. Communication is often poor between members of the senior management team and teachers, many of whom believe that issues raised with a course manager or senior lecturer are often not taken forward or properly addressed. Although groups of senior lecturers meet within their faculties, there are no mechanisms for meeting formally with colleagues at an equivalent level across faculties. The college is aware of the deficiencies inherent in the present structures at middle management level, and consultation has begun on a planned reorganisation.

24 The academic board maintains an effective overview of curriculum developments within the framework of the strategic plan. Besides the permanent curriculum planning and review group, ad-hoc committees are formed in response to immediate issues such as the oversight of moving several areas of work to the new site early in 1995. However, the board of 14 members, with one teaching member representing each of the three faculties, achieves only a limited spread of involvement among staff. Minutes of the academic board meetings are kept in the library, and important issues arising are included in a half-termly news bulletin, 'The Incorporator'. Not all faculty representatives systematically report back at the faculty meetings, and some staff were unsure about where the minutes were to be found.

25 The vice-principal in charge of planning co-ordinates procedures for consultation on many issues, in particular those relating to the strategic plan. The faculty and academic board meetings provide the framework for this consultation. The teaching staff are involved in the setting of targets for enrolment and completion for their courses. The success with which this is done, and the extent to which staff understand the issues, varies across faculties and across teams. The support staff, operating under the management of a vice-principal, form a cohesive group who work together productively and feel that their concerns are listened to. They are represented on all major boards and committees, and the college values their contribution.

26 Summaries of the college's income and expenditure for the 16 months to July 1994 are shown in figures 5 and 6. In 1993-94 the college provided 222,031 units of activity at an average level of funding of £17.65, compared with the median for general further education and tertiary colleges in the sector of £19.06. In 1994-95 the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) has allocated £4,315,872 of recurrent funding for 250,685 units of activity at an average level of funding of £17.15 per unit, compared with this year's median for general further education and tertiary colleges of £18.17.

27 There is a clear and well-understood system for the delegation of funds to faculties to cover consumable items such as books and stationery. Heads of faculty make bids to the vice-principal responsible for college services, based on student numbers and start-up costs for new courses. Within each faculty, a similar formula is used to distribute the allocation between budget holders, who are mostly programme and course team managers. Heads of faculty bid for part-time teachers' hours in a similar way. A case has to be presented to the principal for the creation of extra established posts. The system is efficiently administered and monitored by the director of finance and systems, with regular statements provided to heads of faculty and detailed breakdowns available to each budget holder upon request. Financial statements are provided for the monthly meetings of the resources committee of the governing body.

28 The management information system, while responsive to external information requirements, does not meet the day-to-day needs of the staff. There are effective systems in place for financial and personnel management needs, and for the generation of market intelligence data. However, teaching staff have no direct access to computerised management information, and have to request information from their head of faculty or a member of the college services team. Particular problems are caused at enrolment, when insufficient detail is available to help programme managers adapt quickly to changes in student numbers, although the recent purchase of an optical mark reader is intended to address this. The format of the information is often difficult to understand, with little standardisation, and essential management information on such issues as retention rates and destinations is still paper based. The college is attempting to address these deficiencies. A firm of external consultants has conducted an audit of the information system and the college is producing a strategy for improvements.

STUDENTS' RECRUITMENT, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

29 There is an admissions policy for Harrow post-16 colleges, which assures a place to all school leavers who are in Harrow schools or are Harrow residents. A common application form has to be sent to the college of the applicant's first choice. The Harrow '16 plus' brochure, college prospectus and standardised course leaflets give detailed information on course requirements and entry criteria. Applications are directed to the appropriate faculty, which arranges its own interviewing. There is no central admissions unit. Those applicants who are unsure of which course they want are directed to seek careers advice from student services. The inspection of enrolment procedures demonstrated that teachers were giving careful advice. The system for interviewing students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities was particularly clear and thorough. The enrolment itself was sometimes inefficient because of the build-up of queues, cramped space and poor direction signs.

30 Arrangements for recruiting school leavers are good and show a high degree of co-operation across the four Harrow colleges and the schools.

The colleges jointly visit every school in Harrow for careers events, parents' evenings, and talks to small groups of pupils. Members of the college staff also visit schools outside the borough, especially in Brent, Barnet and Ealing. School leavers are able to sample classes during their last term at school. Drop-in guidance sessions are held on two evenings a week from February. The open evening observed in November was attended by about 1,800 people, including parents and friends of prospective students. A welcoming atmosphere was created by performances of music and dance by students, both in the central foyer and the main hall. There were good displays of students' work.

31 Because of the increase in numbers of students enrolling for GNVQ and other vocational courses, new procedures for the induction of full-time students were introduced in September 1994. These were implemented with variable success, and the process is being reviewed and revised. The induction lasted for a week for most students and three weeks for those on GNVQ courses. The process was supported by a good tutor induction pack, which included suggested activities, some of which were based on the equal opportunities policy. This pack was used and welcomed by tutors. A freshers' fair introduced students to college life. Some induction sessions involved good group work and ice-breaking activities, especially in health and social care. Some students, mostly from GCE A level courses, felt that the induction was too long and poorly organised. Two sessions observed were laborious, and did not provide an encouraging introduction to teaching and learning techniques. The different lengths of induction created difficulties for GNVQ students who were also taking GCSE subjects. Induction includes a valuable opportunity for students to transfer from one course to another. It is also possible to transfer at other times, up to the first half term of a course, following discussion with staff in student services and with the course tutor.

32 The Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Unit test is used for all full-time students to diagnose their needs for additional support. The marking of the test was not co-ordinated and in some cases results were not passed to tutors. A special diagnostic test was given to GCE A level students although the results have never been made available for use. The system for referring students for additional support is dependent on tutors or self-referral and there is no check that all students who need additional support receive it.

33 Records of achievement brought by students from their schools are used at interview and maintained on their course. The college is committed to providing all leavers with the opportunity to have a record of achievement. In 1994 this was achieved for 371 students. The business training unit is beginning to develop systems for the accreditation of prior learning.

34 All full-time students have a personal tutor, whom they are timetabled to see once a week for one hour, or two hours for students on GNVQ courses. The objective of the tutorial programme is to aid the students' progression

and to give information. Tutor notes are distributed weekly. Tutors find these notes useful but consider that they are aimed at GCE A level rather than vocational students. Nevertheless, the tutorial sessions for vocational students were found to be more effective. Tutors make good use of the time for action planning and individual support. Attendance was poor at all the tutorial sessions observed. It averaged 50 per cent. Attendance is recorded, but absences are not followed up systematically. With the exception of one group, the tutorials observed for GCE A level students lacked a clear focus and were badly managed. The college should clarify the objectives of the tutorial programme and the role of the tutor. Tutors should have more training and support in carrying out their role and the quality of the tutorial sessions should be monitored as rigorously as the rest of the curriculum.

35 Action planning is introduced during induction when students are required to complete a self assessment of their personality and skills. The planning process is intended to be developed during the tutorials and to be used as the basis for reporting on students' progress on three tutorial days during the year. On these days classes are closed and students have individual appointments to see their tutors. The tutorial days are timed to coincide with reports on progress from subject teachers. The tutor reviews reports from all subject teachers with the student and these reports are then discussed with parents, if appropriate, on parents' evenings. The formality of the tutorial days is important and they are well attended. The college should consider, however, whether the weekly tutorials, if more closely structured and monitored, could fulfil this function just as adequately, thereby saving three valuable teaching days.

36 Parents and students report that the transition from GCSE in school to GCE A level in college is a difficult one. Students find it hard to adapt to the quicker pace, the greater volume of work and the higher standards required and to make best use of the gaps in timetables for private study. A science foundation programme, developed with funding from the technical and vocational education initiative, is designed to address this problem for students about to embark on GCE A levels in science. The learning-resource centre is a valuable new resource for students and could be most useful in aiding the transition to a higher level of work. However, there is no formal mechanism for recording students' progress in the centre or for reporting progress to tutors as a contribution to action planning.

37 Support is good in mainstream provision for seven students with physical disability, including some with severe disabilities, and for six statemented students with dyslexia. One student has received full-time support in college and has been successful in gaining the offer of a place at Westminster University. Two students with hearing impairments are provided with individual signing support.

38 There are no tutorials for part-time students, although they would be particularly helpful for such students whose first language is other than

English. Since the college does not collect data on the languages spoken by students, the need for language support is difficult to determine.

39 Three senior lecturers take turns to provide guidance and counselling in the central student services area which is open all day. Advice and counselling is offered by all of them on any matter, whether careers, welfare or for personal difficulties. The three teachers and an administrative assistant have qualifications in counselling. Each of the teachers has other responsibilities and a teaching commitment. This is deliberately intended to keep them in touch with students and the curriculum. However, the time that can be devoted to personal counselling is limited. There is no monitoring of the usage of the service or of students' perception of it. This makes it hard for the college to judge its effectiveness.

40 The destinations of students leaving the college are monitored by telephone with the help of a team of advanced secretarial students. The information is then passed to the faculties and the college achieves a response rate of about 85 per cent.

41 The student services area is well stocked with careers information, including leaflets from the careers service, university prospectuses, and computerised information. The staff give advice on higher education applications and offer practice in interviews. There is a good relationship with the careers service, with which there is a service level agreement to provide six hours a week during the academic year. Members of staff of the careers service are involved in the enrolment and induction of students. They also conduct individual interviews and group sessions throughout the year and about 150 full-time students were seen individually during 1993-94.

42 There is a comprehensive, centrally co-ordinated, work-experience programme for vocational students. In addition, 10 students taking GCE A level subjects took advantage of a voluntary programme in 1994 and there are plans to make work experience available to a further 85 in 1995. Twelve students are involved in a young enterprise initiative supported by Kodak. The Automobile Association is collaborating in two BTEC national information technology assignments.

43 Inspectors found poor attendance in GCE A level and GCSE classes, especially mathematics and art and design. A computerised system for monitoring attendance has been introduced. There were initial difficulties with the software and the present procedures depend upon tutors making separate returns which are not linked to the registers. Some tutors are doing this more efficiently than others and some tutors do not support the system.

44 A full-time student liaison officer was recently appointed to work with the students' association to organise clubs, visits and activities and to manage the common room. The students' association offers a selection of clubs and there are active multi-faith religious groups. The student liaison officer is highly regarded by staff and students. The students' common

room is not widely used, and the student liaison officer is working with the students' association to extend its use to all students, with only partial success so far.

45 The college has an access fund, administered through student services, which received 35 applications for financial assistance in 1993-94. All of these were met from the fund.

46 A playgroup provides places for 24 children in the mornings and 16 in the afternoon. Places are available for children, aged from three to five years, of staff, students and people living in the local community. In the current year, 17 children have places in the mornings and 15 in the afternoons.

TEACHING AND THE PROMOTION OF LEARNING

47 Overall, the work inspected had more strengths than weaknesses. In 57 per cent of the lessons observed the strengths outweighed the weaknesses whilst in a further 32 per cent strengths and weaknesses were balanced. In 11 per cent of lessons the weaknesses outweighed the strengths. This distribution of grades is broadly comparable with the distribution over all lessons inspected in the sector during 1993-94. The following table summarises the inspection grades.

Teaching sessions: inspection grades by programme of study

Programmes	Grade	1	2	3	4	5	Totals
GCE AS/A level		5	20	15	7	0	47
GCSE		2	4	6	2	0	14
GNVQ		4	6	5	0	0	15
NVQ		1	2	4	0	0	7
Other (including BTEC, Institute of Linguists, learning support)		12	23	14	6	1	56
Total		24	55	44	15	1	139

48 The majority of courses are carefully and comprehensively planned with clearly-identified aims and objectives. Most courses contain an appropriate combination of theoretical work and practical exercises designed to reinforce and extend learning. In many subjects, extensive use is made of educational visits and project work outside the college to consolidate students' understanding of material covered in lessons and stimulate further their interest in the subject. Students on the intermediate GNVQ in art and design, for example, had visited the Museum of the Moving Image to research possible approaches to a theatrical project which they were undertaking. GCE A level physics students have been involved in unusual and innovative work concerning heat loss from buildings as part of a neighbourhood engineers project. Students of French and German have opportunities to visit those countries and regular visits to the theatre

are organised for GCE A level English students to see performances of plays they are studying.

49 In general, students understand the aims of their courses. In some cases, this is facilitated by detailed schemes of work which are given to them. The students on full-time GCSE and GCE courses in modern languages benefit from particularly informative schemes of work which clearly detail the topics to be covered and the commitment which is required of them.

50 The quality of the teaching in science, business studies, care, modern languages, art and design, English, performing arts and media was good. It was satisfactory in law, politics, sociology, psychology and on courses in English for speakers of other languages. Most lessons were prepared in detail by the teachers concerned. Hard-working, knowledgeable staff usually ensured that the material used and the activities undertaken were of an appropriate standard and were closely matched to the objectives of the lesson. However, the law component on the legal secretarial programmes was too detailed for the needs of the students, who found it difficult to apply theoretical concepts to the issues they were likely to encounter in the workplace.

51 Relationships between teachers and students were firm but friendly and provided a good basis for productive learning. In many lessons, the motivation of the students was enhanced by the variety of teaching methods employed, ranging from formal exposition by the teacher to problem solving exercises by the students, individually and in groups. In some subjects, including environmental science and English, effective use was made of visual teaching aids, such as video tapes and printed notes distributed to students, to emphasise key issues and accelerate the pace of learning. In contrast, in a few business studies sessions, an unimaginative use of teaching aids led to excessive copying by the students and a significant diminution in pace.

52 Although there were some strengths in the teaching of mathematics and on the pre-vocational bridging course for students with learning difficulties, there were also significant weaknesses. Much of the work in mathematics failed to inspire and challenge the students who were extremely reluctant to contribute orally in lessons. Those teaching on the pre-vocational bridging course failed to recognise the varying levels of skills possessed by the students, were excessively prescriptive and did not allow the students to take any significant responsibility for their own learning. This limited the extent to which the course prepared the students for employment and independent living. The college is intending to appoint a course manager for the pre-vocational bridging course.

53 In many of the lessons inspected, the abilities of the students varied significantly. Some teachers were adept at dealing with this and ensured that all students progressed at a suitable rate. Teachers of English for speakers of other languages paid close attention to the differing needs and

language skills amongst their students. Environmental science teachers checked regularly how much individual students had learnt and addressed any difficulties encountered. However, in mathematics little attempt was made to cater for the widely differing levels of confidence and ability amongst students. On care courses, during information technology sessions, there was a failure to recognise that some students had acquired a substantial knowledge of information technology before joining the course.

54 Lack of punctuality amongst students was a serious issue in some of the lessons inspected, particularly on GCE and GCSE courses. In some cases, students who arrived late disrupted the learning of those already present. In business studies and modern languages students were punctual and lessons started promptly. The average level of attendance in the lessons inspected was only 65 per cent of students registered. Undoubtedly, attendance was affected adversely by the industrial action taken by some teachers during the inspection. Analysis undertaken by the college indicates that the attendance figure for most courses exceeded 75 per cent in 1993-94, often by a significant margin. However, in the case of some GCE and GCSE subjects the figure was below 70 per cent.

55 Students on some courses were encouraged to improve their ability to work effectively in small groups. There was an excellent illustration of this on a BTEC national diploma in performing arts where the students were preparing for a forthcoming production. They displayed a confident and mature attitude and an impressive ability to carry out collaborative work to a high standard with only limited supervision.

56 In a significant proportion of subjects, the extent to which students were made aware of the role of information technology was insufficient. For example, the way in which information technology can be employed to present and analyse financial data could be emphasised more forcibly in business studies. The activities undertaken by science students provided them with little opportunity to develop relevant computing skills.

57 Overall, assessed work was of an appropriate standard and related clearly to the objectives of the courses. Most of the work inspected was graded consistently and fairly, although the marking of some GCE and GCSE sociology assignments was over generous. Marked assignments are usually returned promptly to the students, often with constructive comments on how the work could be improved. Such guidance was particularly detailed and helpful in the case of some written work in GCE A level modern languages. This was in contrast to some assignments in care which lacked sufficient feedback and allowed grammatical errors to pass uncorrected.

58 On most courses, the progress students are making is clearly and systematically recorded by teachers and discussed with the students. In a few cases, the summary sheets which record the extent to which students on GNVQ programmes have acquired vocational and core skills are not being kept up to date.

STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENTS

59 Generally, students are well motivated and enjoy their studies. For example, in business studies, students demonstrated enthusiastic responses in class and a willingness to join in discussions and to answer questions. In English lessons, students concentrated well on their tasks and were able to explain their studies clearly and with understanding. In modern languages, students' enjoyment of their work was evident. Adult students on a beginners course in Japanese were observed making excellent progress and also having great fun in learning the correct gestures and the intonation of the language.

60 In class, students were achieving appropriate levels of knowledge and understanding. In the best practice seen in humanities subjects, they were developing the ability to reason logically and were able to analyse and evaluate ideas and examine alternative views. On most courses, the quality of written work was of an appropriate standard, although the amount of attention paid to presentation and the management of students' files differed from course to course. The development of study skills is an integral part of the work on most courses. On GNVQ health and social care courses, students demonstrated skills in managing private study and note making. The success with which students were acquiring and using core skills varied significantly between courses. The development of information technology skills was particularly uneven. Wordprocessed work was seen on a number of courses, including English and care, but it occurred less frequently than might have been expected in business studies, science and languages. Most students are not receiving sufficient encouragement to work on their own, nor are there sufficient materials and software in the learning centre to assist them in this.

61 Practical work and projects enabled students to apply their knowledge and they achieved a good standard of work. Interesting practical projects are carried out as part of the GCE A level course in English language, where students devise and research a topic concerned with spoken English. Examples of work on this topic included studies of the language of disc jockeys and of speakers originating from different parts of Britain. Students on a basic numeracy course were engaged in a simulated shopping task, using real products, which provided practice in reading, writing and counting. In performing arts, students displayed a mature and co-operative attitude in rehearsing for a forthcoming production. Video recordings of their productions of *The Beggar's Ball and Hair* showed that the quality of singing and dancing was good and that students had transformed the hall most effectively with minimal resources. Students on the intermediate GNVQ course in art and design and GCE AS graphics were developing a wide range of practical skills in a variety of media. However, the activities provided for the GCE A level art course were less stimulating and students' progress was limited as a result.

62 Students were developing the ability to work in pairs and in groups and examples of effective work of this kind were seen on a number of

courses. In English, students frequently worked in pairs as the initial part of the preparation for a written task. In most language classes observed, students worked in pairs and used the foreign language effectively. In English as a foreign language classes, this kind of activity enabled young people from different countries to make new contacts. Other examples were seen in English for speakers of other languages and in care courses.

63 Generally, the achievements of students on vocational courses have been good. Of 105 students aged 16-18 in their final year of study on full-time vocational courses, 89 per cent were successful in 1994. This places the college among the top third of colleges in the further education sector on this performance measure, based on the data in the 1994 performance tables published by the Department for Education. The success rate on BTEC national diploma courses has been particularly notable and in 1994, all students completing the national diploma in nursery nursing and the national certificate in business and finance achieved the full award. All but one candidate achieved the full award on each of the national diploma courses in social care, performing arts, business and finance and computer studies. At intermediate level, the results have been more variable. Good results were achieved on the BTEC first diploma courses in caring, and in business and finance, where 70 per cent and 86 per cent, respectively, of students completing the course achieved the full award. On the intermediate GNVQ in health and social care 71 per cent of completing students achieved the full award. Lower success rates were achieved on the BTEC first diploma in information technology and on the first certificate in caring where only 40 per cent and 33 per cent of candidates, respectively, achieved the full award.

64 Good results were achieved on a range of City and Guilds of London Institute (C&G) courses in mainly practical subjects, where nearly all completing students were successful. The overall pass rate for the single-subjects skill examinations of the RSA has steadily improved from 63 per cent in 1991 to 72 per cent in 1994. In the Association of Accounting Technicians awards, passes were achieved by 70 per cent of foundation and 100 per cent of intermediate candidates in the devolved, college-based components. This compared with 39 per cent and 21 per cent, respectively, for the centrally-assessed examination components. Of 67 NVQ portfolios at level 1, 2 and 3 submitted in the faculty of business, finance and legal studies, 43 achieved full awards and 24 achieved partial accreditation. A further eight full NVQs and 214 units were achieved in administration at level 2 through the business training unit.

65 There were variable achievements amongst candidates of English as a second or foreign language. The small number of part-time candidates entering Pitman qualifications in English for speakers of other languages were mainly successful. However, of six entrants to the Northern Examinations and Assessment Board University Entrance Test in English for speakers of other languages, provided for full-time science students, only two passed. In the Institute of Linguists examinations in modern

foreign languages, a minority of entrants gained a full pass. A good proportion, however, gained passes in individual modules.

66 Between 1991 and 1993 the overall pass rate in GCE A level examinations increased from 63 per cent to 82 per cent, and then fell to 68 per cent in 1994. The proportion of entries achieving grades A-C in 1994 was 33 per cent. The 1994 figures are lower than those achieved by 18 year olds in further education colleges nationally. Students aged 16-18 entered for GCE AS/A level examinations scored on average 2.9 points per entry. This places the college among the bottom third of colleges in the further education sector on this performance measure, based on the data in the 1994 performance tables published by the Department for Education. Of the 166 students entered for two or more GCE A levels (or the AS equivalent) in 1994, the average point score per candidate was 8.1, compared with 9.8 in 1993.

67 Pass rates in some subjects at GCE A level have been consistently high or have steadily improved since 1991. These include history, English language, art and design, environmental studies and environmental science, economics, German, design technology and mathematics. The pass rates for these subjects in 1994 exceeded those achieved by 18 year old candidates in all colleges of further education and were comparable with those achieved in sixth form colleges, although with an above average proportion of grades D and E. Media studies has had an almost 100 per cent success rate over the last three years, and in 1994 all candidates achieved grades in the range A-D.

68 In some subjects pass rates have fallen. The results for English language and literature have been consistently very good with a 94 per cent pass in 1993. However, they fell to 65 per cent in 1994. A similar pattern occurred in government and politics, where pass rates exceeded 90 per cent in 1992 and 1993, but fell to 73 per cent in 1994. In geography, the pass rate fell from 71 per cent in 1992 and 91 per cent in 1993 to 35 per cent in 1994. Other subjects demonstrating a declining pass rate since 1992 are business studies, sociology, statistics, mathematics with statistics, biology, chemistry and geology. In all these subjects, with the exception of biology, pass rates were less than 50 per cent and in sociology, geography and chemistry they were less than 40 per cent. The college has analysed the reasons for these poor results and is addressing the problem.

69 There has been a steady improvement in the pass rate achieved in GCE AS examinations, from 49 per cent in 1992 to 67 per cent in 1994. This compares well with the national pass rate for 18 year old candidates in further education colleges in 1994 of 55 per cent, and in sixth form colleges of 73 per cent. The numbers of entries for AS qualifications has increased from 65 in 1991 to 104 in 1994. In 1994, small cohorts achieved a 100 per cent pass rate in Italian and design technology, whilst good pass rates were achieved in geology and graphics (both 80 per cent) and psychology (72 per cent).

70 At GCSE, the proportion of entries where grades A-C are achieved has been consistent in recent years, at 46 per cent in 1992, 43 per cent in 1993 and 45 per cent in 1994. This compares well with the figure of 38 per cent for 16-18 year old candidates in further education colleges in 1994. Very good results were achieved in 1994 in food studies (75 per cent grades A-C), theatre arts (89 per cent) and media studies (70 per cent). In many subjects, results equalled or exceeded those achieved in sixth form colleges by 16-18 year old candidates. These included human biology, French, mathematics, chemistry (University of London Examinations and Assessment Council 5076 Syllabus) and English. Results in law, psychology, English literature and environmental studies were also good when compared with national figures for the further education sector in England. Results were poor, at under 36 per cent in physics, craft, design and technology, art, accounts and sociology. They were very weak in business studies (17 per cent), history (7 per cent) and chemistry (ULEAC 5075 syllabus) at only 10 per cent.

71 There has been a decline in completion rates of 7.4 per cent between 1990-91 and 1993-94. The overall completion rate for 1993-94 was 87.8 per cent. For two-year courses, the completion rate is approximately 80 per cent, although this includes late joiners such as students who re-enrol to repeat the second year. The rate varies between types of course. In 1994, the completion rate for students on the GCE A level course was nearly 97 per cent, and for BTEC national courses 76 per cent. When a cohort of GCE A level students is tracked over two years, without late joiners being included, the completion rate is lower. For example, for the 1990-92 cohort, the completion rate was 66 per cent. On one-year GCSE courses, the completion rate has dropped from 89 per cent in 1990-91 to 71 per cent in 1993-94.

72 Since changing from a sixth form to a tertiary college in 1987, Stanmore College has taken increasing proportions of students wishing to follow vocational courses, including foundation level courses. Against this background, the proportion of students progressing to higher education has increased from 16 per cent in 1991 to nearly 26 per cent in 1994. Just over 43 per cent of completing GCE A level students and 54 per cent of BTEC national students entered higher education in 1994. Of students who completed the access to social work course, 60 per cent entered higher education. In 1994, about 39 per cent of all completing students continued in full-time or part-time further education whilst nearly 12 per cent became employed.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

73 A manager for planning and quality has responsibility for monitoring the implementation of a range of initiatives within the college's quality improvement programme. The system of course review and evaluation for all courses was introduced for full-time courses in 1992 and for part-time courses, including non-vocational courses, a year later.

74 The documentation used by the college for course review and evaluation is good. All course teams summarise their findings for each year of the course on a standardised document using comprehensive notes of guidance. These documents identify a number of issues relating to the courses, for example, study skills, and teaching and learning strategies. When completed, they provide course teams with a useful working document which includes a number of performance indicators against which they can measure the successes and weaknesses of their courses. These include target enrolment, completion, attendance and students' achievements. An analysis of the profile of the course in terms of age, gender and ethnicity is made as a means of identifying any equal opportunities issues. As part of the process of completing the document, course teams are required to draw up an action plan which specifies a timetable for the implementation of any remedial action found to be necessary and identifies who will be responsible for ensuring that action is taken. There is a regular programme of course team meetings, usually about twice a term. Some teams carry out the review process thoroughly and rigorously, particularly those teams, two from each faculty each year, who are required to present the outcomes of their review to the principal and the other members of the senior management team. However, some review documents are completed in a rather cursory fashion and give little account of the developments and issues arising over a year.

75 Heads of faculty monitor the review process in relation to their own group of courses and follow up on action points from course team meetings. The manager for planning and quality monitors implementation of the review process at college level and presents reports to the curriculum planning and review group which is a sub-group of the academic board, to the full academic board and to the senior management team. Despite the strength of these reporting lines for the curriculum review process, the outcomes of reviews are not always reflected in the strategic planning process. For example, the curriculum planning and review group has tended to focus more on forward planning of the curriculum than on the review of existing provision. This forward planning process would be considerably sharpened at both faculty and college level if it were systematically informed by curriculum reviews.

76 The college has a quality audit team which includes members of teaching and support staff and is chaired by the vice-principal with responsibility for strategic planning and quality. It meets monthly and has a remit to undertake a rolling programme of quality audits of the areas covered by the Council's inspection activities. The team has been in place for just over a year and has been active in identifying issues for examination, mainly in response to external initiatives such as the need to draw up a college charter. Fifteen quality audits covering a good range of college activities are either complete or under way. Action plans have been drawn up or are being drawn up for these activities. Examples of the outcomes of such action plans are the introduction of a pilot scheme for

monitoring student absence and a review of the information which should be readily available to students as one of the commitments in the college charter. Senior lecturers and course leaders consider that the absence monitoring scheme will help tutors carry out their role more effectively, although there is a need to reconcile it with the existing registration process. Many of the activities examined by the quality audit team impact on the work of service areas in the college but there has been no systematic approach to setting standards for these areas.

77 The college produced an internal quality assessment report for the inspection. This was written by the vice-principal with responsibility for planning and quality, after some consultation with faculties and key members of staff. It covers all aspects of the provision to be inspected, and includes a concise summary of perceived strengths and weaknesses. Most of the report is descriptive rather than analytical, and facts are presented in a favourable light rather than used as the basis for constructive evaluation. No view is expressed on the quality of teaching and learning. The college's quality audit team will use the assessment report, together with the inspectorate's report, as their agenda for future work. They will present a self-assessment report annually to the board of governors.

78 Students' perceptions of their courses and other aspects of college life are obtained each year through the completion of a series of student survey forms. A form requesting students' initial impressions of their experience at the college is distributed to new full-time students in November. The results of this survey are analysed and widely distributed to staff. There is no formal mechanism for informing students of the outcomes of the survey but some tutors may discuss them during tutorial periods and the outcomes provide useful additional information to course teams carrying out the course review and evaluation process.

79 An appraisal scheme was introduced for all staff in 1994. The scheme focuses on helping staff identify development needs which are consistent with strategic objectives. Senior staff were the first to be appraised and several spoke positively about the process. To date, approximately 20 per cent of all staff have been appraised, and the scheme is being extended to include support staff. The target for all staff to be appraised is July 1995 but it seems likely that this target will not be met. Staff are being trained as the appraisal programme progresses through the college. The documentation for the appraisal process is clear and thorough.

80 There is a clear policy for staff development and the current budget is £27,000 which represents approximately 0.65 per cent of staffing costs. This budget is divided between managers who have responsibility for staff development and curriculum development, respectively. Guidance is provided in the policy document about which activities may be funded under each heading. Staff are encouraged, wherever possible, to undertake staff and curriculum development in-house since evaluation has shown this to be cheaper and often more effective. Two days are devoted to

staff-development activities for the whole staff at different times in the year, but this is not costed against the staff-development budget. Several staff have found it difficult to take part in outside staff-development activities during term time because of the problems of finding suitable cover for their classes or other responsibilities.

81 A sample of staff-development activities are reviewed from time to time with management development being subject to a major review in 1994. An imaginative scheme has now been put in place which enables staff undertaking such activities to gain accreditation from Middlesex University towards a management qualification. The college has a policy of offering in-service training to teachers who lack a teaching qualification on appointment. One former secretary was given time in which to study for a C&G teaching qualification and is now an established member of the teaching staff. Proposals have been prepared for a revised induction scheme for new staff. This includes mentoring arrangements and a programme throughout the year of in-house courses covering such issues as equal opportunities, quality assurance, and strategic planning. These proposals are being considered by the senior management team and the academic board for implementation in September 1995.

82 Currently, the programme of NVQ assessor training involves 54 staff. The college made a successful bid for £10,000 to the local TEC for funding to support NVQ assessor training and related staff-development activities. Arrangements for internal verification are being put in place. To date, only two staff have completed the training and accreditation for Training and Development Lead Body verifier awards, but more are preparing their portfolios for assessment. The college has a commitment to Investors in People and has agreed an action plan with the TEC. It will go through a pre-assessment stage in May 1995 and is aiming for full assessment in September 1995.

83 The Charter for Further Education was widely distributed in the college. A working group of staff, chaired by a vice-principal, prepared several drafts of the college charter for consultation with staff throughout the college before the final version was agreed by the academic board and the governors. The college based its charter on the national model. It is well presented, clear and understandable and it gained a 'highly commended' award in the Department for Education's charter competition. Many of the standards set in the charter are either quantifiable or capable of being monitored. There is a clear indication of the people who will deal with particular issues arising from the charter. A copy of the charter has been provided to all staff and full-time students. Copies are also available to part-time students on request.

RESOURCES

Staffing

84 There are sufficient teachers with appropriate qualifications and experience. They are effectively deployed and provide sound and caring

support for students. The use of part-time hourly paid teachers is generally effective but there is an over-dependence on this provision in art and design. This is currently being corrected. Many staff have relevant industrial or commercial experience but for some this needs to be updated. In areas of development some additional teaching expertise is needed to ensure that viable, up-to-date programmes will be offered. The college is addressing this issue by ensuring that new staff possess the required skills and experience. Learning is supported by competent and qualified technical, administrative and clerical staff. There is also a valuable college-wide scheme under which students taking NVQ business administration provide, as part of their course, clerical and administrative support to senior lecturers. This has benefits for both the students and the teachers concerned.

85 There is an appropriate balance of men and women among the 106 teaching staff, 17 of whom are on fractional appointments. Those on fractional appointments together with the 170 sessional teachers provide 29 per cent of the teaching hours. This proportion has increased in response to the growing numbers of part-time students. The student to staff ratio remained stable, at 13.8:1 for 1992-93 and 1993-94. Ninety per cent of teaching staff and 77.5 per cent of support staff identify themselves as white.

86 Corporate planning and human resource planning are closely integrated and structures are in place to make this process effective in matching resources to learning needs. Personnel policies and procedures are well developed. Staffing budgets are rigorously monitored and the planning system is responsive to course requirements, the strategic plan and to budget constraints. There is an in-built control which prevents a budget overspend on sessional staff. Each section has an allocated budget based upon the best estimate of programmes to be offered and fine tuning takes place regularly.

Equipment/learning resources

87 The planned development of learning resources and equipment is constrained by the combination of the poor inheritance at incorporation and the present low average level of funding which covers such items as teaching materials and minor items of equipment. There is a prudent investment policy and this is evident in the improvement of the provision. Equipment and learning resources are adequate in most areas and are of a good range and standard in science, media studies, and modern languages.

88 A well-managed system of planned maintenance is in place, with repairs and refurbishment carried out by support staff. Stock control and budgets are computerised. Budget allocations, under the single heading faculty materials and consumables, are used to purchase books, stationery and equipment. Some equipment is dated but functional. Compact disk read-only memory (CD-ROM) database equipment is located in the careers

centre and is regularly used by students making career choices using the Educational Counselling and Credit Transfer Information Service database. They also use the MICRODORS careers database. The learning-resource centre is equipped with 22 computers for students to use at any time, CD-ROM facilities, a photocopier, a laminator and a binding machine. There is also a range of reference books and a limited range of purchased open-learning materials.

89 The library has a bookstock of 18,000 volumes and has been allocated £21,000 for the period August 1994 to July 1995. Approximately 14 per cent of this budget is used to purchase journals. Audio-visual and information technology facilities in the library are limited and obsolescent. The director of learning services, who is a member of the academic board, manages the library, liaises with section heads and involves them in the regular and systematic review of the bookstock. Students are also encouraged to provide feedback on the adequacy of the stock and other library provision. Floor space is the major problem and the cramped conditions limit the effectiveness of the provision. The library has 42 study carrels and only 23 general library spaces. A card-index system is used and there is no computerised system for loans, stock control or accession. The manual stock accession records were audited in August 1994. An electronic security system is in operation and is effective. In an effort to reduce losses incurred on unreturned books, students are required to pay a £15 returnable deposit to borrow books. The effect of this strategy on the level of use of the library is being monitored closely.

90 The strategy for information technology includes a policy of upgrading the computer stock from a low base of outdated equipment. The ratio of workstations to full-time equivalent students is approximately 1:9.4. The majority of machines are networked and there are both the 486 and the previous generation of 386 machines. Other computers are available for business studies classes but there is very limited availability in science, mathematics and art and design.

Accommodation

91 The college is situated on a single site in a residential area in the north east of the London borough of Harrow. It is at present located on a purpose-built site. A total of 8,172 square metres of floor area is provided. The original 1969-70 building has 5,258 square metres, the new block added in 1987 provides 2,435 square metres, and free-standing mobile buildings contribute a further 479 square metres. The site covers 1.45 hectares and the land surrounding the buildings is generally open, with car parking provision to meet the planning requirements of the local authority. There are some landscaped areas of mature shrubs and trees. The college also rents accommodation at the Bernays Memorial Hall about half a mile from the main site. This comprises a hall area of approximately 135 square metres with a good vinyl covered floor and there is also a stage. These facilities were found at short notice in response to unexpectedly

large numbers of students enrolling on performing arts courses in September 1994, and they go some way towards meeting their needs.

92 A condition audit of the main college buildings was commissioned in October 1992 which confirmed that the general condition of the buildings was good. The policy of planned refurbishment results in well-decorated accommodation with a notable absence of damage or excessive wear. The general services manager operates the planned maintenance programme effectively in an attempt to raise the standards inherited at incorporation. Students respond co-operatively in helping to maintain the quality of the environment. There was little evidence of litter except in the outer areas used by smokers. Classrooms are light and well ventilated. Limited advantage is taken to use wall displays throughout the college except in the science, media, and modern languages areas.

93 Accommodation is allocated to heads of faculty by the vice-principal, and its use is monitored by the accommodation committee. The present decentralised, manual system of control is no longer sufficiently efficient in matching the accommodation to the size and type of learning group. This leads to some mismatch and overfull classrooms. Accommodation for the performing arts is unsatisfactory, with insufficient spaces of a suitable size and location. Pressure on accommodation also results in very limited provision of private study space or space for students' project work. The library is heavily used for private study at certain points in the college day and is overfull at break times and during the lunch period. It is not available for private study during the vacation. The refectory is barely adequate for the present number of students on site. The students' association's room is relatively small and inadequate in size.

94 The older college buildings have poor access for wheelchair users and major adaptations would be required to provide properly for them. Some parts of the college are not accessible to students with physical disabilities, including those in wheelchairs. Special arrangements are made to provide a library service for students with disabilities in the new accommodation block, which also provides access to the learning-resource centre. Detailed procedures are in place for evacuating the buildings in an emergency.

95 The corporation has recognised that the limited capacity of the existing buildings is a major restraint in meeting the growth objectives in the college's strategic plan. As part of the accommodation strategy, a report was prepared by college staff identifying, for the board of governors, a range of options for meeting accommodation requirements. These included disposal of the present site, remodelling, rebuilding and acquisitions. None of these were considered to be viable in the period of the current strategic plan and the corporation has resolved to rent off-site accommodation to house the planned expansion of student numbers over the coming years. This will provide the opportunity to evolve a longer term strategy to take the college beyond the year 2000.

CONCLUSIONS AND ISSUES

96 Since incorporation, Stanmore College has diversified and developed, despite the constraints imposed by its accommodation. Its main strengths are:

- effective governors who have a broad range of relevant expertise
- a good range of vocational courses which attract growing numbers of students
- clearly-understood procedures for strategic planning which involve all staff
- thorough documentation and systems to support quality assurance
- much good teaching by hard-working, well-qualified staff
- well-managed and effective support staff
- good results by students on vocational courses
- good support in mainstream provision for students with physical disabilities and for those with dyslexia
- good careers guidance, and growing opportunities for work experience
- well-cared-for accommodation which is treated with respect by the students
- increasing provision of part-time courses for adults.

97 To make further progress towards fulfilling its mission, the college should address the following issues:

- the breadth of the existing range of GCE AS/A levels
- poor results and retention rates on some GCE and GCSE courses
- limited awareness by staff of the requirements of industry
- relationships with the North West London TEC which are less productive than they might be
- a management structure which does not ensure consistently effective management at course level, or facilitate communication between staff
- deficiencies in the management information system which restrict the capacity of the staff to manage their teaching
- inadequate arrangements for identifying students' needs for additional support, and for recording the progress of those who receive it
- poor attendance and punctuality in a substantial number of classes
- tutorial sessions which are not valued by many students and some staff
- the provision of training to enable staff to deliver the vocational curriculum effectively.

FIGURES

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- 1 Percentage enrolments by age (1994-95)

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

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

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

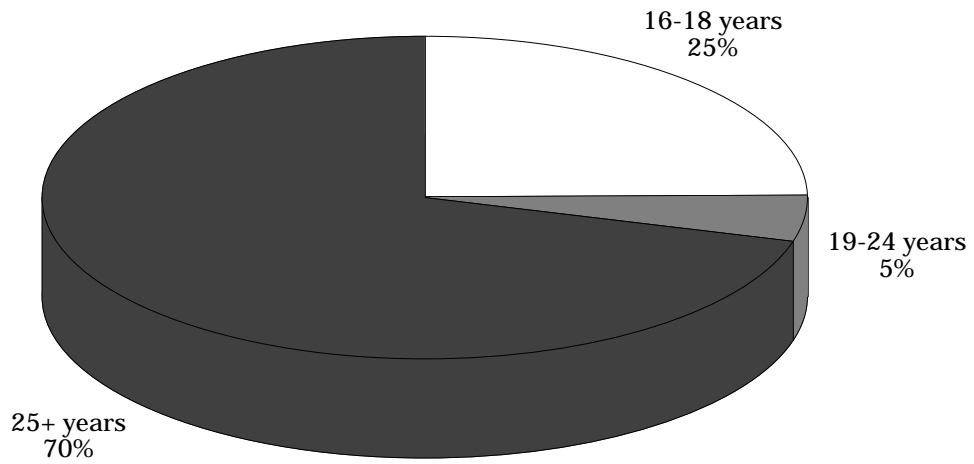
 - 5 Income (for 16 months to July 1994)

 - 6 Expenditure (for 16 months to July 1994)

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

Figure 1

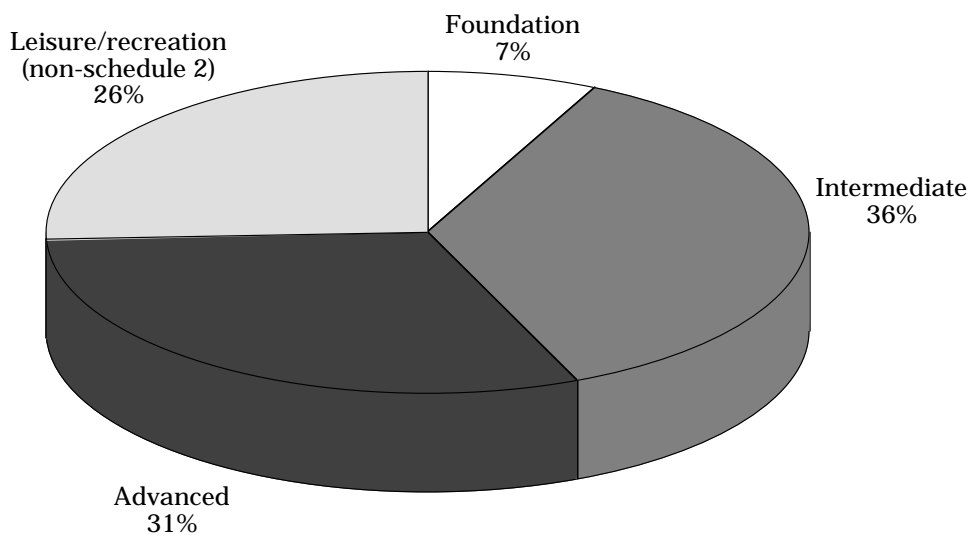
Stanmore College: percentage enrolments by age (1994-95)



Enrolments: 4,701

Figure 2

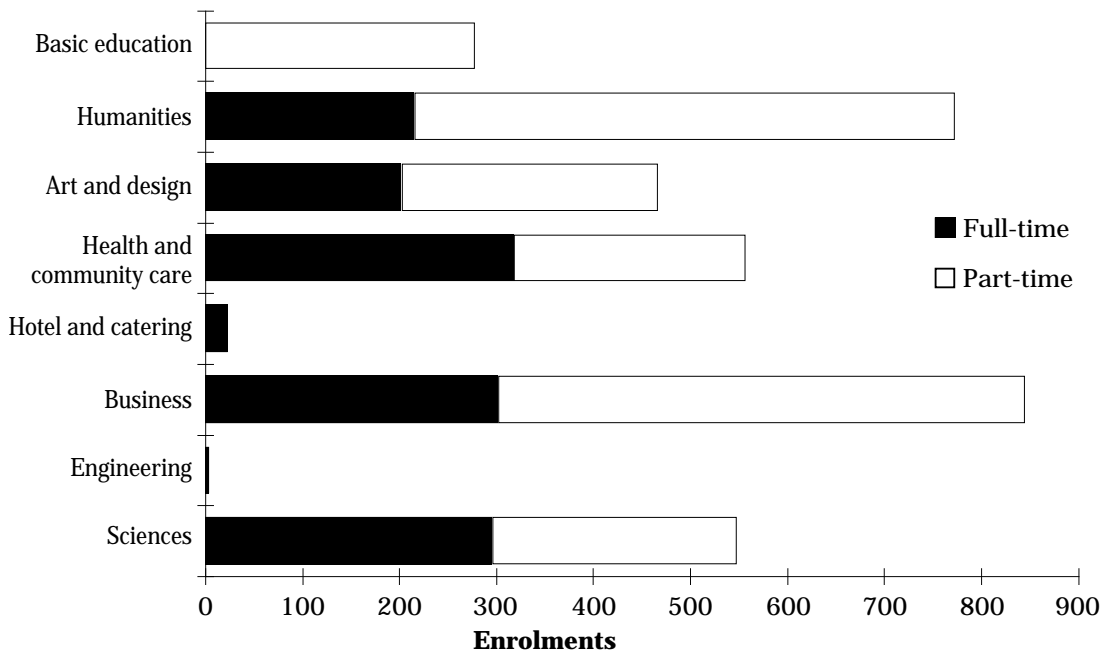
Stanmore College: percentage enrolments by level of study (1994-95)



Enrolments: 4,701

Figure 3

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

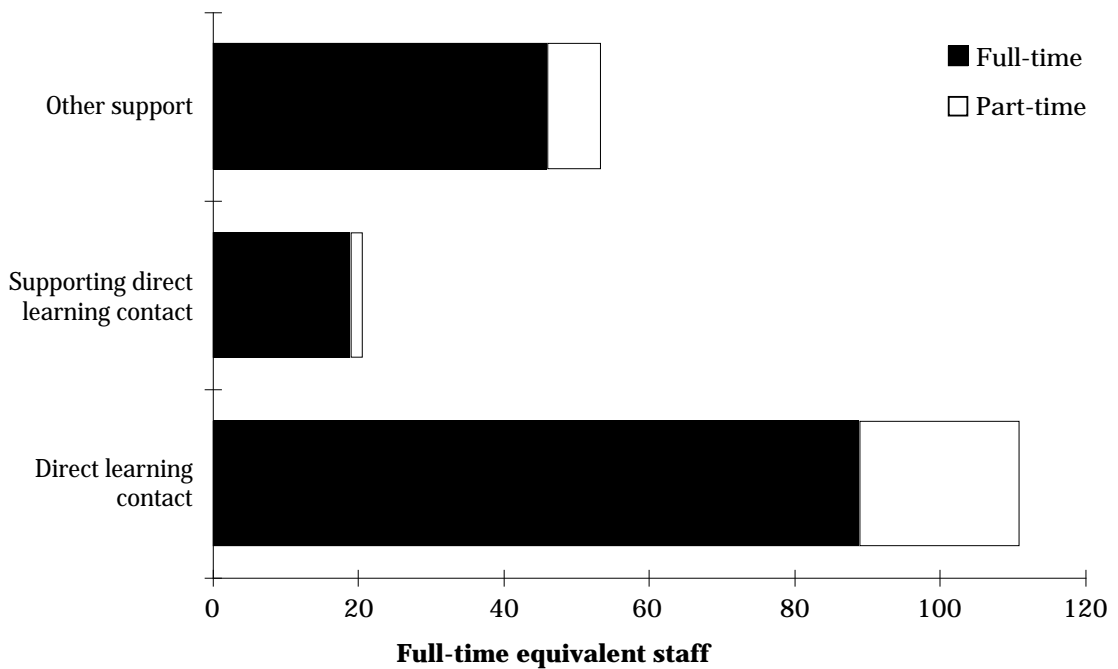


Enrolments: 3,495

Note: this chart excludes 1,206 non-schedule 2 enrolments.

Figure 4

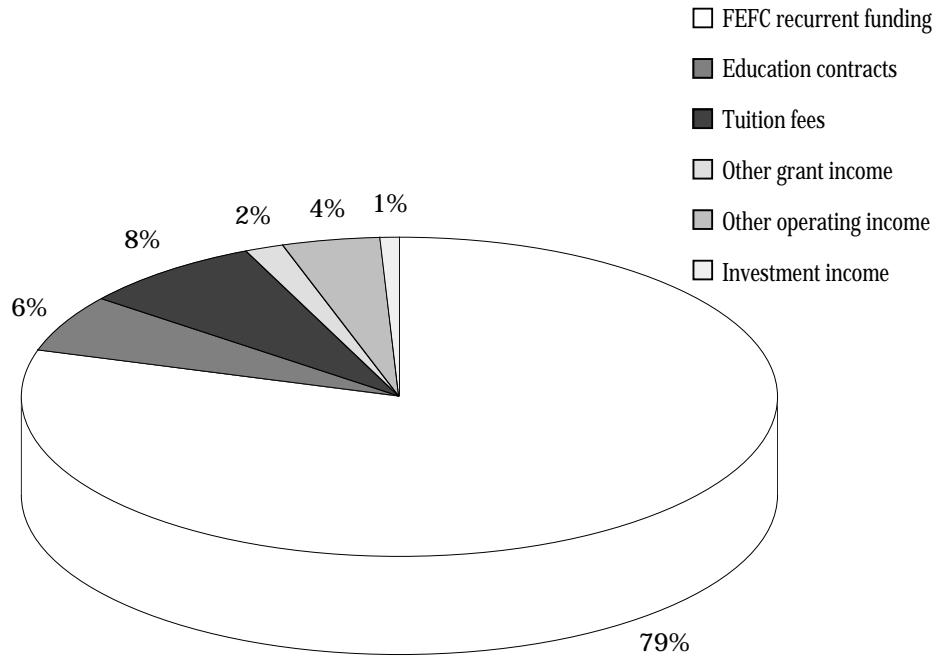
Stanmore College: staff profile - staff expressed as full-time equivalents (1994-95)



Full-time equivalent staff: 185

Figure 5

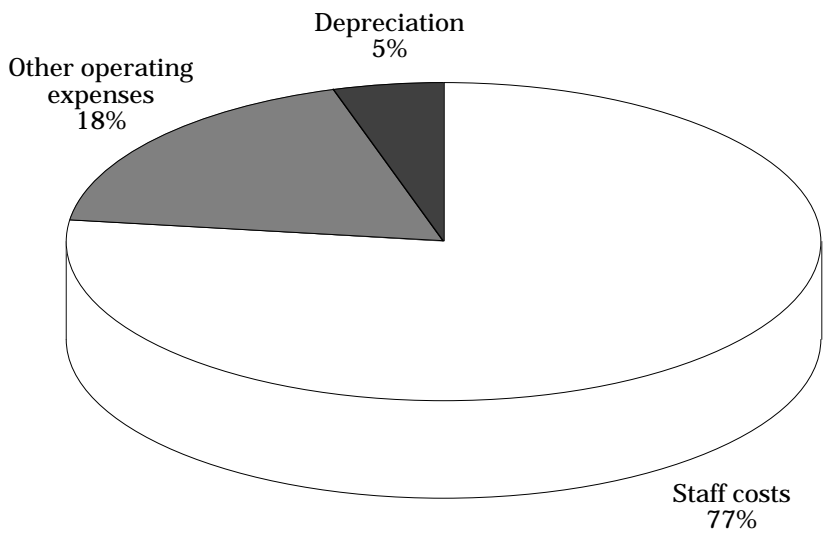
Stanmore College: income (for 16 months to July 1994)



Income: £6,545,000

Figure 6

Stanmore College: expenditure (for 16 months to July 1994)



Expenditure: £6,405,000

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