

**REPORT
FROM THE
INSPECTORATE**

Grimsby College

April 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 45/95

GRIMSBY COLLEGE
YORKSHIRE AND HUMBERSIDE REGION
Inspected September – December 1994

Summary

Grimsby College offers a broad range of full-time and part-time programmes for school leavers and adults in South Humberside and parts of North Lincolnshire. The college is responsive to the needs of industry and the community. Student numbers have grown significantly in recent years. The college is well governed and well managed. The strategic planning processes are well developed and consultative. There is a comprehensive range of policies and good use is made of a wide range of performance indicators to monitor progress. Students are well supported and much of the teaching is of good quality. Examination success rates compare favourably with national averages. A high proportion of students go on to employment and higher education. The college's quality assurance system is comprehensive and effective. Staff are well qualified and experienced. The accommodation is well managed and much of the equipment is of good quality. The college should: improve its provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities; strengthen its computerised management information system; improve the use of labour market information in marketing; ensure that annual reports are more consistent in quality; strengthen the co-ordination of student support; establish links between staff development and appraisal; and improve aspects of course team management.

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

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

Curriculum area	Grade	Curriculum area	Grade
Sciences and mathematics	2	Hotel and catering	3
Construction	3	Health, hair and beauty	2
		Social and community care	2
Engineering	2	Art and design	2
Business	2	Humanities	3

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INTRODUCTION

1 Grimsby College was inspected during the period September 1994 to December 1994. The college's enrolment and induction procedures were inspected at the beginning of the autumn term. Subsequently five full-time inspectors and 12 part-time registered inspectors spent a total of 47 days on specialist subject inspections. Inspectors visited 199 classes, held meetings with college staff and inspected a broad range of students' work. The inspectors were also shown a wide variety of documents about the college and its courses. In the week beginning 21 November 1994 five full-time and three part-time registered inspectors spent a further 37 inspector days examining aspects of cross-college provision. During the period of the inspection there were meetings with governors, a representative of the Humberside Training and Enterprise Council (TEC), head teachers, local employers, parents, students, and the management, teaching and support staff of the college.

THE COLLEGE AND ITS AIMS

2 Grimsby College, a general further education college in South Humberside, is a major provider of education and training for the towns of Grimsby, Cleethorpes and Immingham, as well as large parts of North Lincolnshire.

3 Grimsby, Cleethorpes and Immingham have a combined population of around 160,000. Grimsby's major industries are food production, fish sales, and car imports and exports. The commercial port of Immingham and the seaside resort of Cleethorpes are nearby, with significant industry on the Humber bank comprising mainly chemical and petrochemical plants. Developing sectors include travel and tourism, caring and health provision, retail, transport and distribution, as well as leisure and tourism.

4 The nearest general further education college is some 30 miles away. Grimsby has a system of 11-16 years comprehensive schools and a sixth form college on a site next to Grimsby College. In the Cleethorpes and Immingham areas the schools have retained their sixth forms.

5 The main college site is in the centre of Grimsby, and the college occupies four other sites in the town. The curriculum is organised into 12 schools, which are grouped together into four faculty areas: continuing education; construction and engineering; catering, health and social care; and business and management. The school of art and design operates separately from the faculties.

6 As well as its further education courses, the college offers a number of higher education courses. Most of these are provided under a 'partner college' arrangement with the University of Humberside; others are provided in association with Nottingham Trent University and the University of Huddersfield. Approximately 12 per cent of the college's students are following higher education courses. The college works closely with the Humberside Adult Education Service to provide vocational and

leisure courses for adults, and is the largest provider of TEC-funded youth and adult training in the area.

7 At the time of the inspection, the college had 10,850 students, of whom 3,195 were full time, and the remainder part time. Nine hundred and fifty-six students were following non-vocational courses. Full-time equivalent enrolments by age and level of study are shown in figures 1 and 2. Enrolments by mode of attendance and curriculum area are shown in figure 3. The college employs 261 full-time equivalent teaching staff and 169 full-time equivalent support staff. A staff profile, with staff expressed as full-time equivalents is shown in figure 4.

8 In its mission statement, the college sets itself the aim of providing high-quality education and training opportunities relevant to the needs of individual clients and employers. In doing so, it aims to identify clearly the needs of its client groups, assure the quality and efficiency of its services, and enable its students to achieve their potential through clearly-defined progression routes. It aims to provide opportunities for education and training which are accessible to the local and wider community and which lead to nationally-recognised qualifications. It is committed to working closely with other organisations to provide a coherent programme of post-16 education and training opportunities in the area.

RESPONSIVENESS AND RANGE OF PROVISION

9 The college is making a significant contribution to the achievement of national targets for South Humberside. These targets are used in its strategic and business planning and are disseminated effectively to most groups of staff. There is a wide range of courses which can be followed through a variety of modes of attendance. Courses lead to General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQs), National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) and to many other certificates and diplomas in vocational areas. Through its 'start afresh' scheme and other programmes the college offers access courses to further and higher education for adults. The wide range of courses supports the training needs of many firms in the region. Most of the courses are at intermediate level or above; the proportion of foundation level work is relatively small.

10 There is a good range of higher education courses. In addition to higher national certificates, there are 10 higher national diplomas and three degrees validated by the partner universities. In its marketing, the college emphasises that students can progress within the institution from foundation or intermediate level through advanced studies and into higher education. This full spectrum of opportunity is the more necessary because of the college's distance from other large providers.

11 The college has grown quickly over the last five years. The enrolment targets for 1993-94 have been met, mainly through increasing the number of full-time students. There has been some decrease in part-time

enrolments in construction and engineering, in line with national trends. However, this decline has been halted, and more than compensated for by the substantial growth in full-time student numbers in these subjects.

12 The present policy of developing strong faculties, each with a distinctive range of courses has made it difficult for students to cross faculty boundaries. For example, only a small proportion of GNVQ students also take a General Certificate of Education advanced level (GCE A level); there are barriers to mixing GNVQ and NVQ units flexibly; and there are limited opportunities for students to receive support in mathematics, English and other subjects. The college is presently investigating ways of removing barriers and introducing greater flexibility.

13 The college works to attract recruits from groups who would not normally be involved in further education. The college is the largest provider of youth and adult training in the area and operates job clubs in Grimsby, Barton and Immingham. Where appropriate, the timing of teaching programmes is arranged to assist adult returners, and nursery facilities are provided for those with children. The college caters for students with a wide range of learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There is excellent support for students on mainstream courses who have hearing or visual impairments or suffer from dyslexia, but the majority of students with learning difficulties are taught in separate groups with little opportunity to become integrated with mainstream groups or to pursue courses leading to nationally-recognised qualifications.

14 Links with local schools are well established and highly effective. They are co-ordinated by a team of seven schools-liaison staff who organise visits, open events and 'taster' activities. The college collaborates with the nearby sixth form college and Cleethorpe's 11-18 schools to provide information to school leavers about all post-16 provision in the area and to operate common application procedures. Intermediate level GNVQs are franchised to four local schools. The college provides mandatory units and the schools provide the optional units. There is joint NVQ level 1 provision in three schools to help introduce vocational elements to their curriculum.

15 There are expanding links with the community. For example, a theatre company involves 500 people per week of all ages from five upwards in drama activities on the main college site. An outreach centre has just been opened at Immingham to make information technology and adult basic education available in that area. A range of non-vocational adult education is organised in conjunction with the local adult education service. The college water-sports centre runs popular sailing and canoeing courses.

16 Many subject areas have developed strong links with employers. For example, staff in hairdressing work closely with local employers and the college meets the needs of the refrigeration industry, by organising substantial open-learning activity in this aspect of engineering and related fields of process technology. Some of this work is supported by college

tutors visiting companies, to provide teaching scheduled to accommodate shift patterns of working. In some parts of the college the links with employers are weak. A number of employers feel that faculty advisory groups do not influence the curriculum sufficiently and that opportunities to meet their requirements are sometimes missed. The college has appointed an industrial liaison manager for one year to investigate the variations in existing practice across the college.

17 A significant amount of full-cost work is undertaken through the faculties and through the college's consultancy unit, Associated Industrial and Management Services. This unit has an annual turnover in excess of £500,000, works closely with the TEC, and is the sole provider of the New Business Development programme for the Grimsby travel-to-work area. A college commercial manager has recently been appointed to co-ordinate all full-cost activity.

18 A range of well-produced and informative marketing materials is published, aligned to the needs of different client groups but with a co-ordinated house style. A marketing team of four, including a manager, organises and co-ordinates effective marketing and promotional activities within the faculties. Although significant market research has been carried out by the team and by external consultants, the total marketing strategy makes little reference to local labour market information and takes insufficient account of the college's strategic plan.

19 The college has an equal opportunities policy. An equal opportunities committee meets regularly, and has promoted good practices in some subject areas. For example women-only evenings are held in construction, and there are comprehensive equal opportunities guides for adult and youth training work. However, other aspects of equal opportunities policy and practice are underdeveloped. The policy document itself is brief, unattractive and does little to raise awareness of equal opportunities issues. The committee has failed to develop action plans in response to matters brought before it. References to equal opportunities in college literature are often inconsistent or inappropriate, and the topic is not an explicit requirement for student induction or tutorials.

GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

20 The governing body has 20 members. There are 12 independent members, one TEC director, three co-opted members, two members from the college staff, one member from the community, and the principal. At the time of the inspection, there were two vacancies. Members possess a range of experiences which are useful to the college. Several governors hold senior positions in major industries, and some have professional knowledge of finance, law, estates management, health and safety, and the community. Only two members of the governing body are women.

21 Governors understand their statutory duties, are aware of the distinction between governance and management, and are knowledgeable

about relevant legislation and Council circulars. They make an important contribution to the college. For example, they have contributed constructively to the college's strategic plan, and each of the faculty advisory boards is chaired by a governor and the audit committee has received several reports on issues such as the college's management information systems and personnel procedures. The governing body meets once a term and the key policy and resources subcommittee once a month. Governing body meetings and meetings of the subcommittees are well attended and supported with appropriate papers. Governors are willing to question procedures and issues are keenly debated at their meetings. A code of practice for governors, based on Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) guidelines, is close to being adopted.

22 The senior management team includes the principal, the two vice-principals, the four deans of faculty and the head of the school of art and design. The team has been strengthened since incorporation by the appointment of a director of finance and administration. Heads of school are responsible for the management of staff, programmes and resourcing within each school, and they report to a dean of faculty. Some cross-college management areas, for instance, quality assurance, student services, marketing and schools liaison, are the responsibility of designated senior staff who report to the appropriate vice-principal. Some of the senior staff are assisted by teachers who co-ordinate the work within a faculty. The roles and responsibilities of the management team are clear and familiar to staff, but some aspects of the cross-college functions, for example student support and course management, are unevenly developed in the different faculties.

23 There are clear lines of communication. Information is communicated effectively to staff, for example through staff meetings once a term and through a weekly college newsletter. Teachers and support staff have ready access to college managers. The senior management team hold formal minuted meetings every fortnight; they also meet informally once every other week to consider strategic issues. At the course team level, matters are less well managed; some meetings are not minuted and some are poorly attended by part-time staff.

24 The strategic planning process is well developed. The strategic plan makes explicit the three driving principles which underlie the college's mission statement: quality, opportunity, and relevance. The annual operating plan translates these principles into action in identifying clear objectives, providing measurable targets, indicating the means for their achievement, and assigning management responsibility. School and cross-college managers are then required to produce an annual plan, consistent with the operating plan, for their own area. In practice, however, some of the annual plans fall short of what is required. Some plans for cross-college functions lack measurable targets and objectives are described only in vague terms. Course leaders have not always been fully

involved in the discussions on target enrolments. Consequently some of the targets are over ambitious.

25 Over recent years, the college has steadily improved its performance. For example in the period from 1991-92 to 1993-94, full-time student numbers increased by 39 per cent, and full-time equivalent student numbers by 23 per cent, while the number of full-time equivalent teachers remained fairly constant. Financial reports and the procedures for the allocation of revenue and capital to the schools are well documented. Financial allocation takes into account student enrolments, servicing requirements and the costs of teaching. The system is understood and regarded as equitable by staff. Heads of faculty are able to vire between allocations to schools as appropriate. The unit costs of provision have been calculated down to the school level, and the possibility of calculating costs per individual course is being investigated.

26 The college's average level of funding for 1994-95 is £15.65 per unit. The median for general further education and tertiary colleges in 1994-95 is £18.17. The college has a projected budget for the 12 month period August 1994 to July 1995 of £14.460 million of which 61 per cent is funded by the FEFC. Summaries of the college's estimated income and expenditure for the 12 months to July 1995 are shown in figures 5 and 6.

27 The college maintains a set of policy statements, which are comprehensive and informative. For example, the policy statement on the environment seeks to promote a sound awareness amongst staff of environmental issues. The statement includes useful guidance on implementation of the policy. Separate subcommittees of the academic board have been established to support the implementation of key policies. For example, the committee for health and safety has clear terms of reference and meets regularly.

28 The college's computerised management information systems provide a basic range of information for college managers. They are currently being improved and updated. The college is installing a system which allows data to be collected directly from the class registers, and which will provide a wide-ranging source of performance data for managers.

29 Targets for students' enrolments are set at course level and reviewed as part of the strategic planning process. Overall targets were achieved for 1993-94. Retention and destination data are monitored and analysed.

STUDENTS' RECRUITMENT, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

30 The college has effective arrangements for giving information and guidance before enrolment. A liaison team undertakes a thorough programme of activities with potential applicants in local schools. The team's work is supported by attractive and helpful written information and by promotional events organised by the college's marketing unit. A

common applications procedure, operated in conjunction with other local schools and colleges, ensures that applicants receive information about the range of post-16 opportunities in the area. The adult guidance unit, part of the Humberside careers service, is located on the college site. It provides students with impartial and independent guidance on courses. The marketing unit also gives guidance to those applicants who are undecided about their career. The college's management information system provides regular progress reports on applications and enrolments.

31 There are cross-college policies and supporting guidelines for recruitment, enrolment and induction, and the college is currently running a pilot scheme for the assessment and accreditation of students' prior learning. A period of induction is built into each course. It includes visits and talks on the library and the services available to students. Students receive detailed information about the college and their course through the college charter, student handbook and course handbooks. They are advised about their rights and responsibilities.

32 The college seeks to assess the numeracy and language skills of all full-time students, and a substantial number of part-time students, as part of their induction programme. Those students who are identified as requiring extra support are directed to the learning-support centre. The quality of the support is high, but only a small proportion of those identified as needing this support actually attend the centre. A system of faculty co-ordinators has been established to promote and extend the links between the faculties and the learning-support centre.

33 Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive a high standard of support, which in the case of school leavers starts during their last two years at secondary school. The support for students with dyslexia, hearing and visual impairment is particularly strong.

34 Each full-time student is allocated a personal tutor, and a tutorial period of at least one hour is included in the timetable of all full-time courses. Some part-time students also attend regular tutorials. Tutorials are mainly concerned with the review of students' progress and the completion and regular updating of individual action plans which contribute to students' national records of achievement. The process is well established across the college. In some cases, however, these records are not in a form which students can readily understand, and action planning for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, which involves them in setting their own learning objectives and evaluating their own progress, gives insufficient attention to the skills and competences students need to acquire.

35 The student services unit includes a college counsellor, chaplain, and accommodation officer. The team works closely with a number of external agencies and provides a service which is much valued by staff and students. It gives specialist advice on matters such as welfare rights and benefits, and it administers the college's access fund which assists students suffering

financial hardship. Personal counselling is available from the full-time professional counsellor and the college chaplain. The student services team assists personal tutors in their work with students and provides some staff development, but it does not play a full part in the work of faculties or in the tutorial programme. At present, the unit is located in a remote part of the college, but plans are well advanced to move it to a more appropriate site near the main entrance.

36 The student health centre, which forms part of the student services unit, is staffed by full-time and part-time nurses and is used extensively. As well as dealing with accidents and emergencies, it liaises with other local medical services and promotes health awareness in the college.

37 Careers guidance is strong. It benefits from a successful partnership between the college and the Humberside careers service. Careers officers attend the college on a rota basis for individual appointments and deliver short courses to tutorial groups. A well-equipped careers room provides students with a good level of information about careers and opportunities in higher education. Higher education applications are co-ordinated by a senior member of staff.

38 The students' union is given strong support from staff co-ordinators in each faculty, led by a students' union manager. The union assists students in financial difficulty, organises social and fund-raising events and responds to students' concerns. It serves a valuable social function for students living away from home.

39 There are good childcare facilities on site for children aged from two-and-a-half years to five years. The college gives financial assistance from its access fund to parents who would not otherwise be able to afford the nursery fees.

40 There are no formal links between faculties in respect to student guidance and support. Reliance is placed on informal links, and the various elements of student support are unco-ordinated. As a result, there is no forum for the development of this area of the college's work, and it is not comprehensively evaluated. Nevertheless, the college has made considerable progress in this area over recent years.

TEACHING AND THE PROMOTION OF LEARNING

41 Of the 199 sessions inspected 57 per cent had strengths which outweighed the weaknesses. The following table shows the grades awarded as a result of the inspection.

Teaching sessions: inspection grades by programme of study

Programmes	Grade	1	2	3	4	5	Totals
GCE AS/A level		2	14	12	2	0	30
GCSE		1	10	9	3	0	23
GNVQ		7	14	12	4	0	37
NVQ		1	17	7	0	0	25
Other		13	34	25	12	0	84
Total		24	89	65	21	0	199

42 Schemes of work had been written for most courses, and most lessons were well planned. Students received supportive learning materials and were involved in a variety of learning activities. In a small number of classes the quality of the work suffered because the aims of the sessions were unclear, lesson plans were sketchy, teachers were not well prepared, topics were poorly introduced, or time was lost while teachers looked for teaching materials.

43 Practical work was generally well integrated with theory. Some of the work undertaken in realistic working environments, for example in the college's hairdressing salons, was especially effective. Students of business studies made good use of the college's business centre to simulate commercial practices.

44 The development of information technology skills is promoted mainly through the college's information technology learning centre. The centre is popular with students and well used. Within it, students and teachers received good support from the specialist staff and from informative introductory guides. The extent to which computing is integrated with other aspects of the curriculum varies. In catering, for example, there was little integration, whilst in hairdressing, computing formed an integral part of students' work.

45 Teaching in the mathematics and English workshop and the dyslexia unit was well organised. The students, many of whom had been diagnosed as in need of additional support, used a range of helpful specialist materials and the work they completed was carefully recorded. Staff were particularly careful to ensure that students felt at ease in the workshop.

46 In classes where students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities studied alongside other students, teachers worked hard to ensure that they received appropriate support and were part of the group. Where this work was conducted in simulated workplaces, such as a hairdressing salon or a kitchen, students developed a range of practical skills and gained in confidence and self esteem. In classes where students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities were taught separately from other students they benefited from a wide variety of different activities including outdoor pastimes, personal care, mathematics, French, and English. However,

these activities had not been sufficiently well planned to ensure that students made effective progress. Much of the second-year work was a repeat of the first year.

47 In some subjects, students were provided with learning materials which enabled them to progress at a pace which suited their level of understanding and experience. For example, the geography course was supported by booklets which contained homework exercises, explanations and illustration of topics and some areas of engineering and construction craft activity were similarly well supported.

48 The extent to which students' work and progress is monitored is generally satisfactory. In English, and health and caring, teachers write full, helpful comments on students' assignments. In art and design, and motor vehicle engineering there are regular checks on students' progress, and teachers make good use of formal testing techniques in sports studies. In some classes, however, teachers failed to ensure that all students fully understood the subject matter.

49 The specialist inspections were held at a time when a small number of classes were being held in temporary accommodation owing to the late commissioning of new buildings. Teaching in some of these sessions was adversely affected by the poor quality of the accommodation, screens and chalk boards. By the end of the inspection the new buildings had been fully commissioned and much of the temporary accommodation removed.

50 The teaching of brickwork was well planned. The use of instruction manuals enabled students to progress at a pace suited to each individual. Students worked well in these sessions, and were well supported by the teacher, who carefully monitored and recorded their progress. Other construction craft work was less well planned; there was some mundane teaching and the standards of work were lower.

51 Although the teaching of English language was competent, it seldom enthused students. Teachers rarely used handout material or other visual aids to reinforce and enliven the topic. The students' involvement in class was limited to brief responses to the teachers' questioning, and there was little genuine discussion. However, students' written work was always carefully assessed.

52 Foreign language lessons were well structured. Teachers used a variety of teaching methods including whole-class repetition, paired work, and individual speaking practice. In most language classes, teachers were insistent that students spoke in the language they were studying, but there were cases where students were given insufficient practise at speaking.

53 Humanities students' work was thoroughly and fairly assessed, and teachers provided helpful written comments. In some lessons, the students' understanding of the subject matter was reinforced by well-guided discussion. In other classes, topics were covered too rapidly and too superficially to enable all students to gain a thorough understanding.

54 The well-organised group activities and practical work in media studies and performing arts ensured lively responses from the students. The range of activities was well matched to course aims, and students' assignments were challenging and relevant. The layout of some of the accommodation limited the interaction between students. For example, first-year students on some art and design courses often worked in small booths, which limited their opportunity to share ideas.

55 On health and caring courses, well-planned assignments helped to develop the full range of competences required. Students received helpful feedback on the standards they were achieving. They were encouraged to work on their own and in co-operation with others.

56 Hairdressing was well taught. Teachers were knowledgeable and good at matching the work to the differing abilities and experience of students. Practical and theoretical sessions were well managed, and teachers ensured that the underpinning scientific principles and the related aspects of design and retailing were included in the curriculum.

57 Theoretical sessions in catering and leisure relied too heavily on students copying from overhead projector transparencies. Little use was made of source materials such as journals and newspapers. In contrast, the practical work was enhanced by the quality of the equipment in use, and students were well motivated. As a consequence of teachers' weak planning, students were not receiving systematic support in developing core skills, and this was reflected in the quality of their assignments. Some teachers of catering and leisure studies were uncertain about assessment procedures. Teachers of sports studies were adept at organising work to suit students' needs and abilities. Learning activities were well paced, and careful attention was given to the explanation of technical terms.

58 Business studies courses were well taught. Lesson objectives were clear and students experienced a good range of learning activities. Students worked particularly effectively in small groups. On business administration courses, and in the practical office training workshop, learning materials enabled students to work on their own at their own speed and the weaker students received helpful support and encouragement from the teachers. In a few sessions, some students were given numeracy tasks which were too difficult for them.

59 Engineering lessons were well planned. Engineering courses included an effective mix of theoretical and practical work. Learning materials such as handouts, booklets and test exercises, all contributed to students' learning. Teachers paid close attention to the standards of students' written and practical work. Students worked well in the practical workshop sessions. In most classes, there were good working relationships between students and teachers. Both teachers' and students' industrial experiences were used effectively to enhance the learning.

60 The learning support materials used in specialist computing classes were of good quality. Group work was well organised and effective.

Teachers set tasks for the class which enabled them to evaluate the work of each group of students in turn, whilst ensuring that all students were kept busy. In one such session, the members of each group acted as company directors in identifying and presenting the data-handling requirements of a hypothetical firm thus helping students to develop their interpersonal skills as well as their knowledge and understanding of the subject.

61 Mathematics teaching was generally competent but lacked variety. There was accurate treatment of subject matter and good individual support for the students when working through set questions, but there was little attempt to encourage contributions from students, to organise practical investigation or to use computers.

62 Science classes were conducted effectively. Teachers used a variety of strategies and techniques to promote learning and their questioning technique was skilful. Students responded readily and showed a good understanding of scientific principles. Practical work was organised effectively and integrated with the development of theory. The needs of students with lower ability levels were not always adequately catered for, and the monitoring of individual students' progress was inadequate.

STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENTS

63 Students, particularly adult students, displayed interest in and enthusiasm for their studies. In most classes there were friendly and co-operative relationships between teachers and students. Students were well motivated, and levels of attendance were generally satisfactory.

64 In all curriculum areas, most students were effectively developing their knowledge and understanding. They were able to apply what they had learned and were achieving standards appropriate to their individual abilities and to the level of the courses they were studying.

65 Most students were also acquiring appropriate practical skills. In engineering and science they were developing suitable manipulative skills, and observing safe working practices. In performing arts, dance and creative studies, they demonstrated their achievement of a wide range of practical skills including good performance skills. Although construction activity involved a high level of interaction between teacher and student, the standards of craft work were sometimes low and some of the projects were too small to simulate industrial practice realistically.

66 Eighty-two per cent of full-time students, aged 16-18, in the final year of study on the advanced vocational courses included in the Department for Education's 1994 performance tables were successful. This places the college among the middle third of colleges in the further education sector on this performance measure. There were high pass rates on some courses. For example, the pass rates in art and design, social and community care, and science were above 90 per cent and, in business studies, all students who completed their courses were successful.

Much lower pass rates of 50 per cent and 43 per cent, respectively, were achieved on engineering and construction courses.

67 There were good pass rates on some intermediate and foundation courses: of those completing their courses, 98 per cent of business studies students, and 83 per cent of health, hair and beauty students, were successful. The success rate in science and engineering was 75 per cent. The lowest success rate was 57 per cent in hotel and catering. Overall, 78 per cent of full-time students who completed a one-year intermediate or foundation level course passed their examinations.

68 Many of the students following vocational courses who failed to achieve the full qualification, achieved partial success, and in several cases went on to higher education or to more advanced vocational courses.

69 Of the 226 GCE A level subject entries in 1994, 37 per cent gained grades A-C and 72 per cent grades A-E. Pass rates over the four years from 1991 to 1994 average 40 per cent at grades A-C and 77 per cent at grades A-E. These results compare favourably with the 1994 provisional pass rates for all sector colleges other than sixth form colleges of 36 per cent and 68 per cent, respectively. For the eight subjects where there were 10 or more entries in 1994, the percentage gaining grades A-C varied between 44 per cent in sociology and 100 per cent in art and design. Pass rates, grades A-E, exceeded 80 per cent in English, mathematics and physical education. Students aged 16-18 scored, on average, 3.2 points per entry in 1993-94. This places the college among the middle 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.

70 Of the 712 General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) subject entries in 1994, 56 per cent achieved grades A-C, compared with the 1993 average of 50 per cent for all general further education colleges. In the 23 subjects with more than 10 entries, the percentage gaining A-C grades varied from 22 per cent in physics to 100 per cent in welfare and society, and English literature. A-C pass rates of over 80 per cent were also achieved in Spanish, German, French, drama and psychology. Some of the students take English and mathematics as additional options to their main course of study. The GCSE mathematics pass rate, grades A-C, of 38 per cent is in line with the national average for general further education colleges, and for English language the pass rate of 66 per cent compares favourably with the national average of 58 per cent.

71 Of the 124 students enrolled on the one-year adult access to higher education courses, 47 per cent achieved their qualification. Science students were the most successful with all the enrolled students successfully completing the course.

72 Student retention rates are monitored on an annual basis. Of those students enrolled on one-year courses on 1 November 1993, 69 per cent of full-time students and 68 per cent of part-time students completed their

course. Of those enrolled on the first year of a two-year course on 1 November 1992, 66 per cent of full-time students and 52 per cent of part-time students completed the course in 1994. Within the programme areas, annual retention rates vary from 96 per cent on full-time advanced vocational art and design courses to 38 per cent on one-year part-time GCE A level courses. Many students who leave their course do so for financial or personal reasons.

73 Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities who were taught alongside other students were achieving skills and knowledge appropriate to their individual abilities. However, where they were taught separately from other students they were making insufficient progress, often displayed immature behaviour, and had limited opportunities to gain externally-validated qualifications.

74 Students achieve good rates of progression into employment or to further and higher education. In 1994, 18 per cent of leavers went on to higher education, 32 per cent continued in further education and 30 per cent entered employment or government training. Ten per cent were unemployed, and the destinations of the remaining 10 per cent were unknown at the time of the inspection. Sixty per cent of art and design students went on to higher education. Ninety-three per cent of leavers from the school of motor vehicle, fabrication and welding, and 95 per cent of those following courses in information technology, found employment or took places on further or higher education courses.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

75 The college has recently introduced its own charter, produced to a high professional standard. It is modelled on the national charter for further education and contains detailed statements on the key entitlements of students, employers and members of the local community. A senior manager is developing a set of standards by which the college's performance in relation to the charter can be measured. There have been a series of faculty and school briefings to inform teachers and support staff about the charter and its implications. The charter contains a clear complaints procedure, and suggestion boxes are provided for students to make comments about improving the quality of provision. A detailed analysis of students' perceptions of the college has been undertaken as required by the national charter. Students' perceptions of the quality of course provision and the standards of teaching are positive. Adverse comments relate mainly to the quality of social and environmental conditions. Employers also responded to a recent survey with generally positive responses about the college and its courses.

76 The quality assurance system is designed to support the college's strategic objective to improve the quality and effectiveness of its services to clients. Its elements are in place and are well documented. They comprise: the charter, annual course evaluation reports, surveys of student

and employer perceptions, in-depth course reviews, external moderators' reports, faculty advisory boards, a system of internal inspection and the use of a range of performance indicators. Each faculty has a representative on the college's quality assurance team which is chaired by the quality assurance manager. A subcommittee of the academic board is responsible for initiating policy and monitoring the implementation of quality assurance procedures.

77 In a number of cases, annual course reports are insufficiently detailed and there is no systematic attempt to link other quality indicators such as the student questionnaires and external moderator reports to course outcomes and action plans. Statistical data is not always analysed in sufficient depth. Some course team meetings are infrequent. In some faculties, annual reviews are monitored carefully and action plans discussed; but this is not always the case. The in-depth course reviews conducted by faculties are a more consistent and effective form of quality assurance. They result in numerical performance ratings and action plans with specified completion dates, and they are systematically monitored by the quality assurance manager.

78 Statistics on retention, achievement and destinations are provided for all courses. The information is charted on a historical basis to provide benchmarks for quality improvement. Targets are monitored by the deans of faculties and heads of school. In extreme cases, where progression into employment has been poor, courses have been discontinued. A start has been made on defining service standards for cross-college functions such as marketing, the library and student services, but as yet these standards are insufficiently developed to be used as meaningful and measurable performance indicators.

79 The college aims to gain Investors in People status early in 1995. A new mechanism of annual, line-management appraisal is in place for support staff in the college and appraisal for teachers is operated on a biennial basis. Appraisal for teachers is not linked to the process of identifying staff development needs. Staff development needs are considered annually in relation to the faculties' business planning.

80 About 40 per cent of the staff development budget is held centrally to support training which is related to strategic objectives. For example, the college has recognised a lack of recent industrial experience on the part of some staff and has given priority to the funding of industrial secondments. The budget devolved to the faculties is appropriately aimed at achieving objectives identified in business plans; for example the introduction of GNVQ programmes, and individual training needs. The outcomes of courses attended by staff are not systematically reviewed even though intended outcomes are recorded on all applications for training. There is a wide range of professional development opportunities for support staff: some are following courses in accountancy, and other courses leading to higher national certificate qualifications.

81 An induction programme for all new teaching and non-teaching staff provides a clear overview of college-wide functions and the work of faculties. It does not, however, provide opportunities for staff to become familiar with the range of computer software used in the college.

82 The college self-assessment report provides a detailed commentary on the college's performance in relation to all aspects of the FEFC inspection framework. It fails to examine the strengths and weaknesses of cross-college aspects of provision and is, in parts, more descriptive than analytical. Nevertheless, it provides a well-informed and balanced position statement.

RESOURCES

Staffing

83 Teachers are well qualified, committed and experienced. A number of staff have experience outside the field of education and approximately 80 per cent have teaching qualifications. Part-time staff are well qualified and most bring recent commercial and industrial expertise to their teaching.

84 Support staff are also well qualified and experienced. They are fully involved in the consultative and developmental processes of their sections. In science, a highly-qualified team of technicians support teaching and learning, and in information technology there are learning facilitators to support the open-access information technology/computing suite. The number of support staff in the curriculum areas is adequate, with the exception of beauty therapy, motor vehicle engineering and plumbing.

Equipment/learning resources

85 The ratio of computers to students is approximately 1:11. The majority of computers are modern and able to operate the latest software. There is a developing college network operating from a fibre-optic cable which will enable most parts of the college to access a wide range of software and compact disk read-only memory (CD-ROM) databases. About 130 computers are installed in the open-access computer suite. Effective monitoring provides tutors with useful information on how much time their students spend in this area. There are also clusters of computers in other parts of the college such as the recently-upgraded computer-aided design centre, and the art and design studios.

86 Equipment for the refrigeration and air-conditioning workshops and hairdressing salons has been recently upgraded. The college is well equipped in catering, art and design, and science. A new business centre office provides a suitable environment to assess work-related competences. In engineering some of the equipment is out of date, and in motor vehicle engineering there is a shortage of modern vehicles.

87 The library is located on the main site and equipped to a high standard. It has a cluster of modern computers and CD-ROM facilities, a wide range of periodicals and photocopying machines. For students with impaired hearing there is a text-to-voice translator. In business, art and design, languages and science, there is a good stock of books. In engineering, and health and caring, there are insufficient books and some of the existing books are dated. Formal links between the library and the curriculum area staff are poorly developed.

88 In addition to the books in the library, full-time students are able to use the sets of text books available for each class.

Accommodation

89 The college is located on five sites in Grimsby: the main site at Nuns Corner, the Westward Ho Centre, Eleanor Street, Acorn Park, and the dock-side, water-sports centre. The main site and the nearby Westward Ho site are located in pleasant suburban surroundings, are easily accessible by road, and have lawned areas around each centre. The college aims to centralise accommodation on the main and Westward Ho sites by the summer of 1995. The Victorian building at Eleanor Street, which is structurally sound but in a poor state of decoration, and the leased building on the Acorn Park business estate will be relinquished. In addition, there is a recently-opened, outreach centre in Immingham.

90 The main site provides attractive accommodation, recently enhanced by an extension and considerable refurbishment of existing provision. The new library is spacious and well furnished and provides a good learning environment. Other additions, include the extensions to the motor vehicle and refrigeration workshops.

91 A large, well-furnished open-plan area forms part of an imaginatively-conceived suite of specialist and general purpose rooms which provide good accommodation for the teaching of information technology. Access to this suite is controlled by turnstiles operated by swipe cards.

92 There is a wide range of engineering workshops, many of which are being extensively refurbished and enlarged. These workshops will provide spacious accommodation of good quality. Newly-equipped hair salons provide excellent teaching areas, but the reception area is of lower standard and there is no changing area for clients.

93 General purpose classrooms are furnished to a high standard and provide good teaching areas. Many are carpeted, newly painted and provided with audio-visual teaching aids.

94 The art and design courses at the Eleanor Street annex are housed in spacious studios. There are plans to move this work to the Westward Ho site where the performing arts courses are taught.

95 There is a range of attractive eating outlets and the refectory facilities on the main site have been recently extended and attractively refurbished.

There is no student common room available to non-smokers. There are playing fields suitable for team games at the main site. The gymnasium is small and unsuitable for indoor activities such as volley-ball and badminton. An extension is planned.

96 Staff accommodation in the new block on the main site is well furnished but some of the staffrooms in the older buildings are too small for the number of staff using them.

97 Most of the accommodation provides good access for students with physical disabilities. The estate and its planned maintenance programme are managed effectively. Room use is monitored. Some accommodation is being adapted to provide multi-purpose teaching rooms. Health and safety policies are comprehensive.

CONCLUSIONS AND ISSUES

98 The college is making good progress towards achieving its mission. Its strengths are:

- the wide range of provision offering good progression routes for students
- the strong student recruitment over recent years
- success in recruiting students who would not normally have come to study in further education
- the good links with local schools, industry and the community
- the governors' commitment and expertise
- the well-defined management roles and clear lines of communication
- a well-developed strategic plan, achieved through effective consultation
- the sound procedures for the allocation of revenue and capital
- effective quality assurance, including the use of performance indicators for setting targets and monitoring achievement
- effective procedures for students' guidance and support
- the high standards of much of the teaching
- generally satisfactory and sometimes good examination results
- the good rates of progression to employment or to further and higher education
- the effective links between staff development, strategic objectives and schools business plans
- well-qualified and experienced teachers and support staff
- good computer hardware and software
- generally good accommodation.

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- 99 If the college is to raise standards further, it should:
- strengthen the links between marketing strategy, labour market information and college strategic planning
 - improve aspects of the management of course teams
 - improve the college's computerised management information systems
 - develop performance indicators for cross-college services
 - ensure that annual course reports are of a consistent quality
 - strengthen the co-ordination and evaluation of student support
 - improve provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including their access to qualifications and opportunities for progression
 - strengthen links between staff development and appraisal
 - ensure the full implementation of its equal opportunities policy.

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)

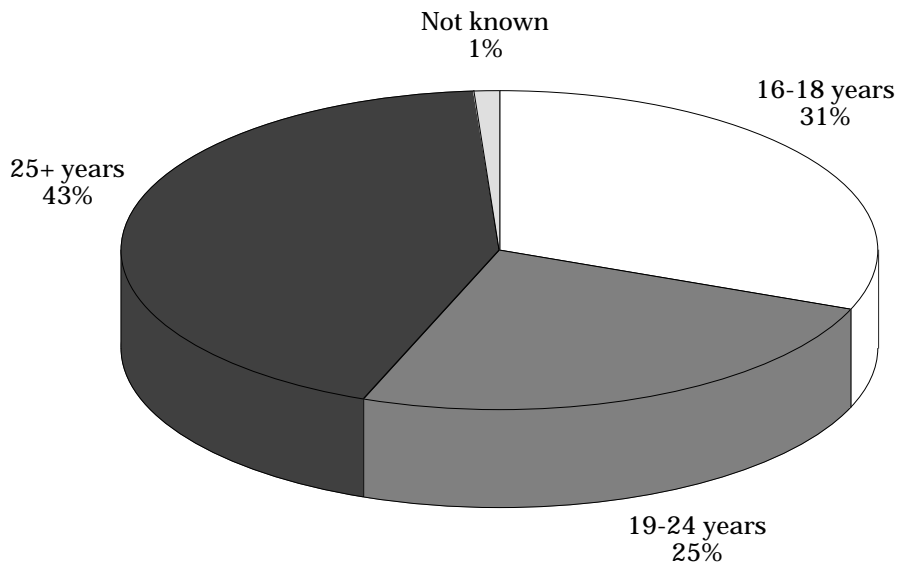
 - 5 Estimated income (for 12 months to July 1995)

 - 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

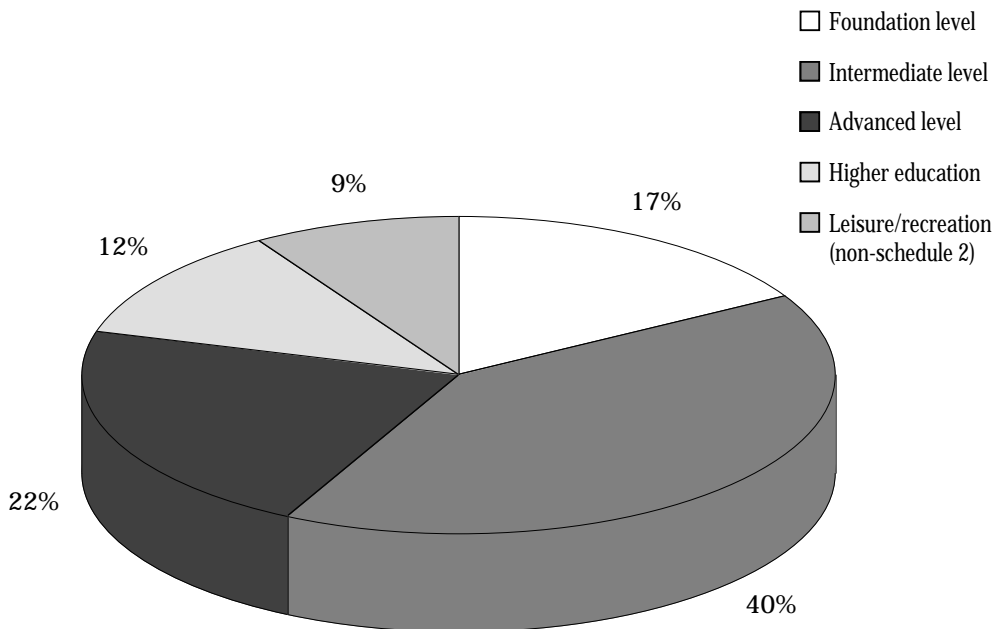
Grimsby College: percentage enrolments by age (1994-95)



Enrolments: 10,850

Figure 2

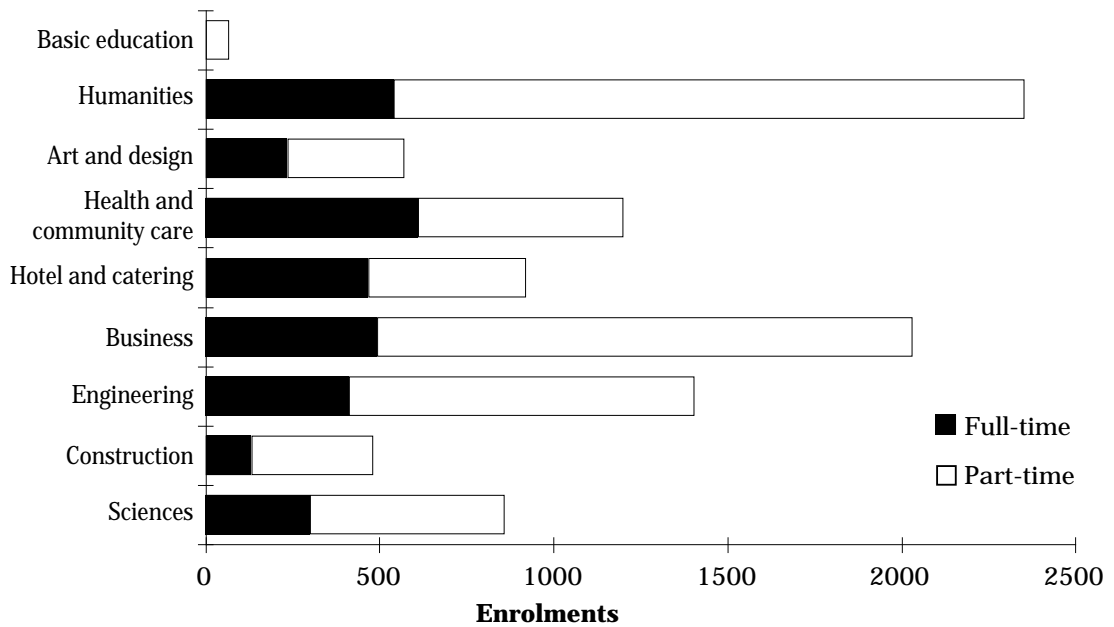
Grimsby College: percentage enrolments by level of study (1994-95)



Enrolments: 10,850

Figure 3

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

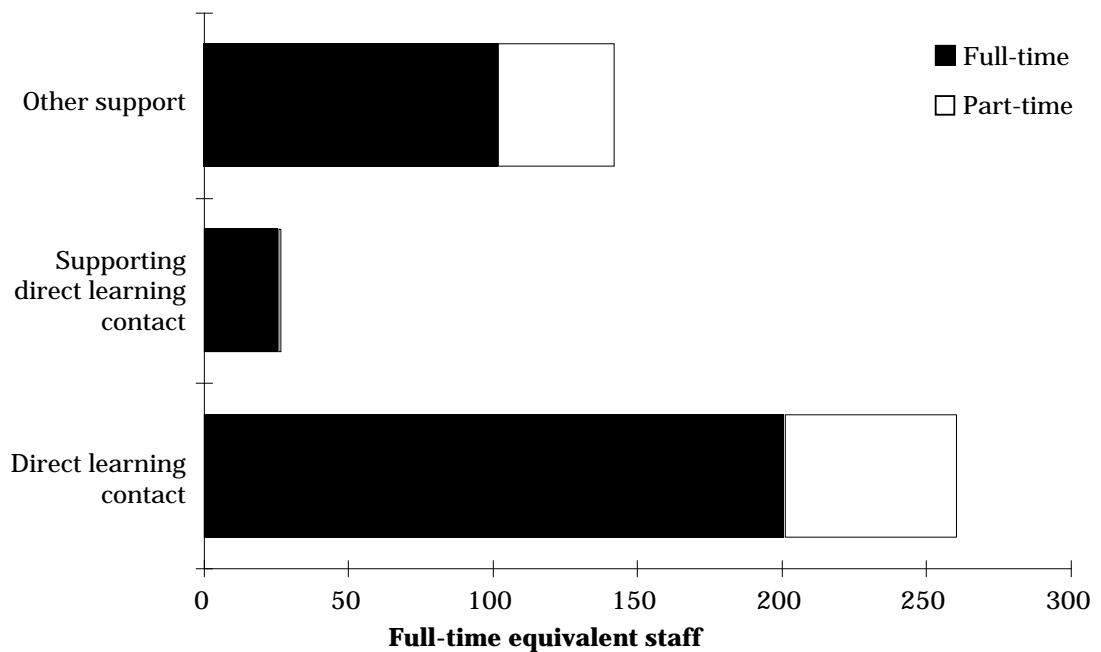


Enrolments: 9,894

Note: enrolments of 9,894 exclude 956 students following adult non-vocational courses.

Figure 4

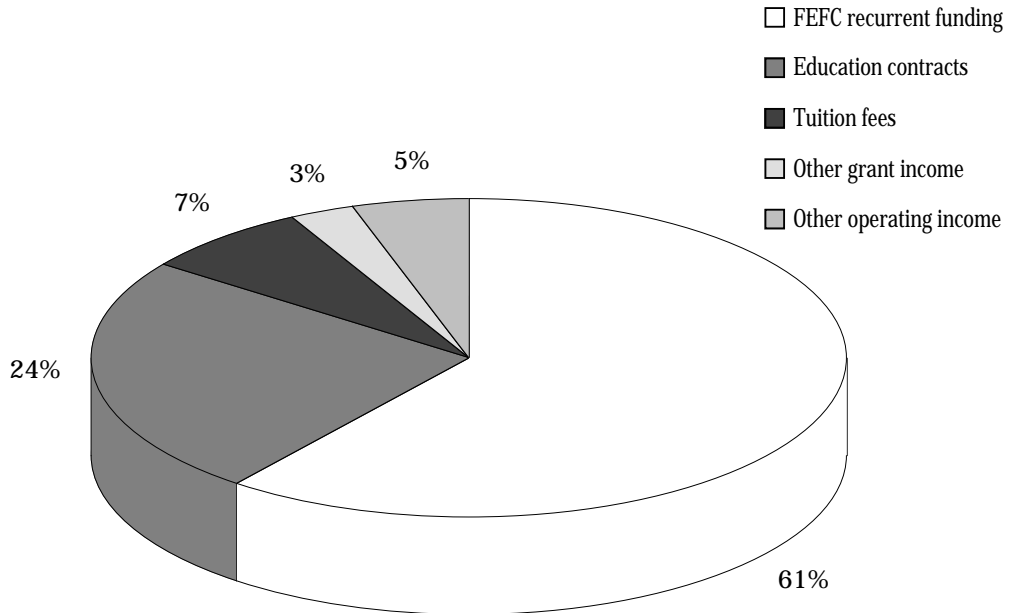
Grimsby College: staff profile – staff expressed as full-time equivalents (1994-95)



Full-time equivalent staff: 430

Figure 5

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

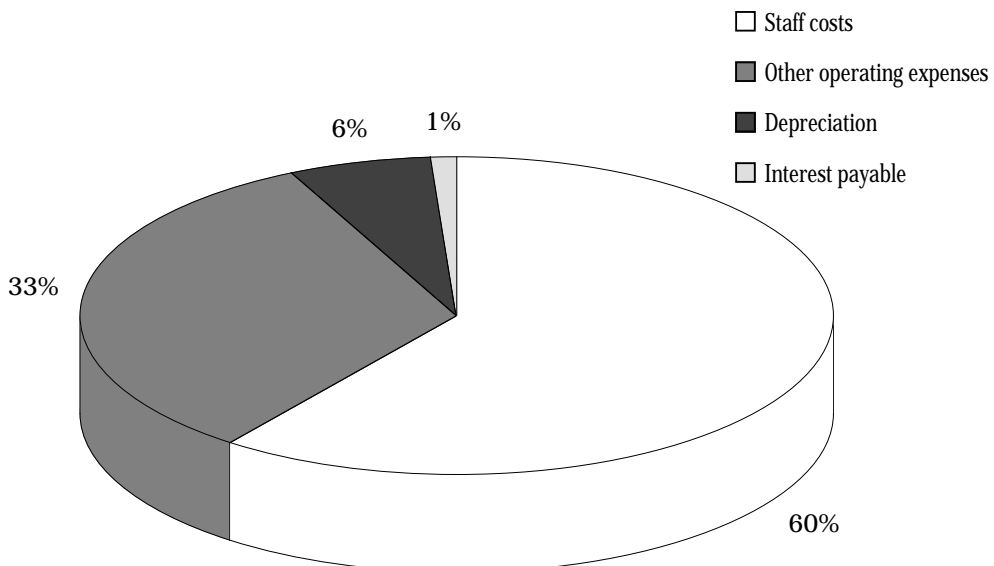


Estimated income: £14,460,000

Note: this chart excluded £64,000 for other income-generating activities.

Figure 6

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



Estimated expenditure: £14,621,000

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