

# **Plumpton College**

## **Annual review 2006/2007**

### **Introduction by the Principal**

We set ourselves high targets for 2006/2007 and I'm very pleased to report that we have achieved our objectives. Our student numbers at both FE and HE level continue to grow and our Ofsted inspection in June recognised our outstanding performance in terms of achievements and standards. We have continued to develop our building resources; we have completed the dining room and classroom development at Plumpton and a new classroom at our centre at Netherfield, and have started a redevelopment of the animal care centre. Growth at our out centres includes the acquisition of a new teaching centre near Robertsbridge to focus on horticulture and environmental studies. We would not have achieved our success without ongoing support from our collaborative partners, including the Learning & Skills Council (LSC) and the University of Brighton, and from the commitment of our dedicated staff.

Des Lambert, Principal

### **Our mission and objectives**

***Plumpton College is committed to providing excellent education and training***

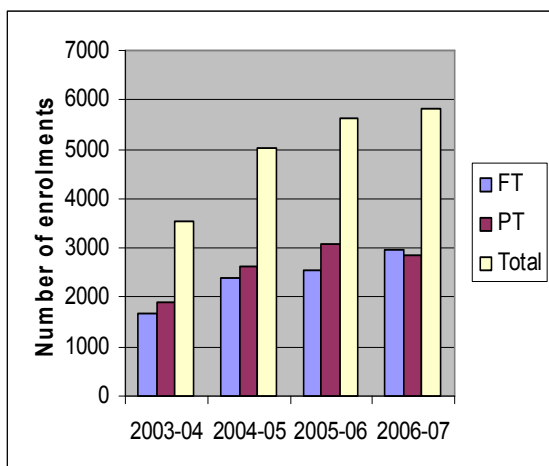
To achieve this our three key objectives during 2006/07 were:

- Continuing growth in student numbers
- Achieving outstanding quality in land based provision
- Financial strength

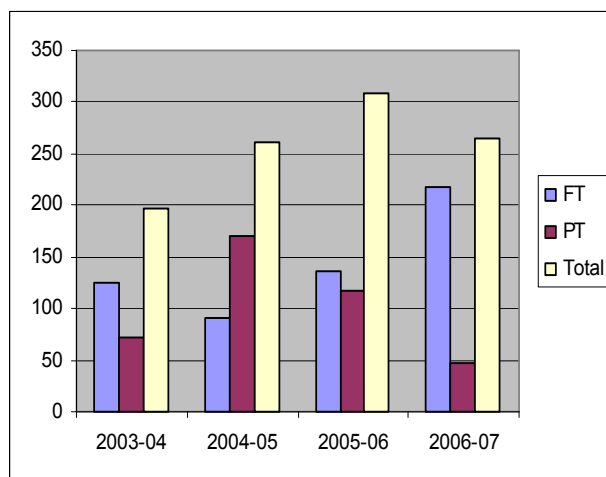
### **Strong growth.....**

Total student numbers (ie heads, not enrolments, and including Higher Education (HE) and 14-16 year old students) have risen by around 74% over the last four years.

Further Education (FE) enrolments:



Higher education (HE) enrolments:



Growth in 16-18 year old student numbers was particularly strong in 2006/07, with an increase of nearly 20% over the previous year. 14-16 year old student numbers increased by around a third, and as the range of our HE provision increased so did HE student numbers.

Student numbers*	Age 14-16	Age 16-19	Age 19+
Full time Further Education (FE)	14	515	176
Part time / short course FE	218	86	1964
Full time Higher Education (HE)	0	50	212
Part time / short course HE	0	5	84
<b>Total</b>	<b>232</b>	<b>656</b>	<b>2436</b>

\* ie heads, not enrolments, and therefore including continuing students. The FE figures include non funded students.

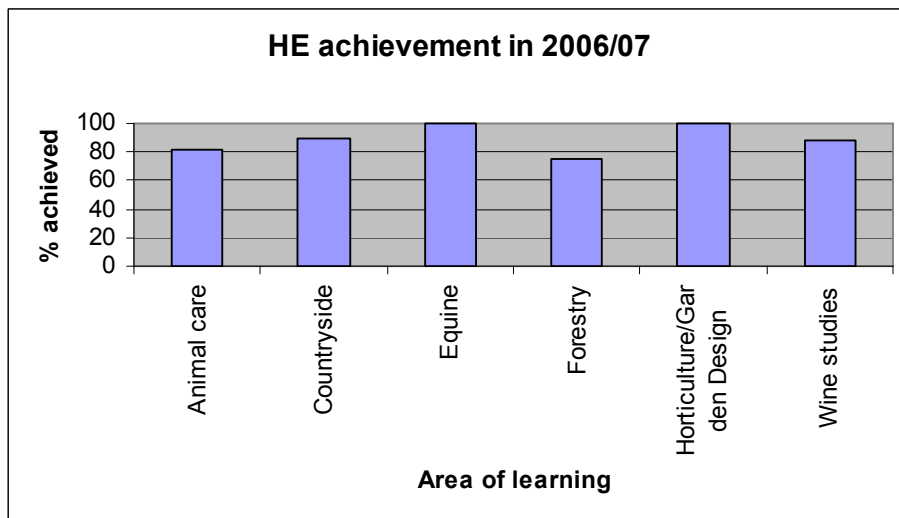
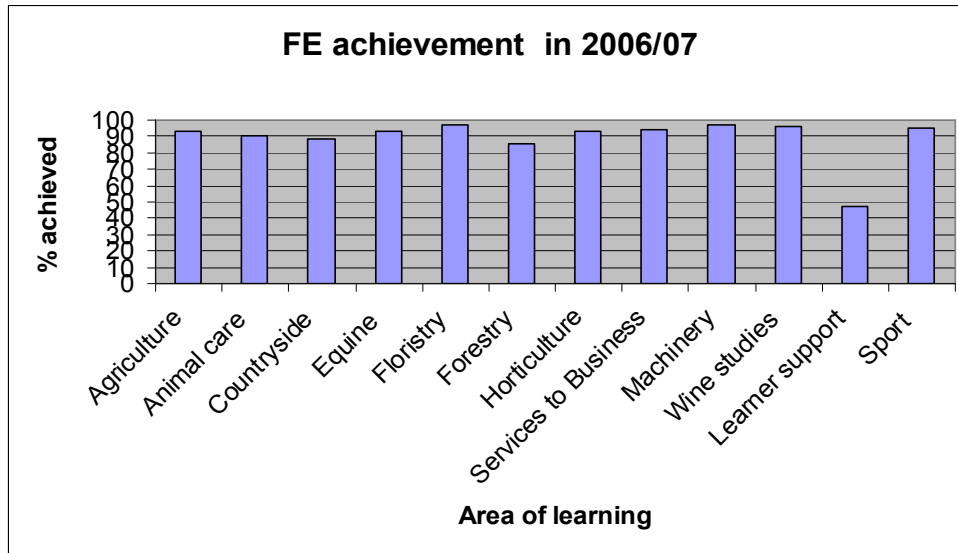
We continued to develop our provision of basic and key skills, both at Plumpton and particularly at our Netherfield out centre near Battle. And we increased the number of employers with whom we engaged, from 679 to 700. Our Business Training Department, located in the Sussex Rural Business Centre at Plumpton, engaged with around 700 businesses and trained 2,519 individuals, including employers and entrepreneurs as well as employees. At our Netherfield Centre for Sustainable Food and Farming, we delivered 62 bespoke one and two day courses with 474 attendees with a particular focus on farm diversification. Netherfield delivered business or marketing advice on 147 occasions. 83 horticultural businesses were actively supported in the final year of the ESF project "Roots Connections" and a total of 299 employees attended courses.

### Outstanding quality.....

Our overall FE success rate in 2006/07 was 86% (comprising 93% retention and 91% achievement), which was 8 percentage points above national benchmarks - the highest of any Sussex college and of any land based college in England. In HE, we recorded an overall success rate of 65% (73% retention and 87% achievement).

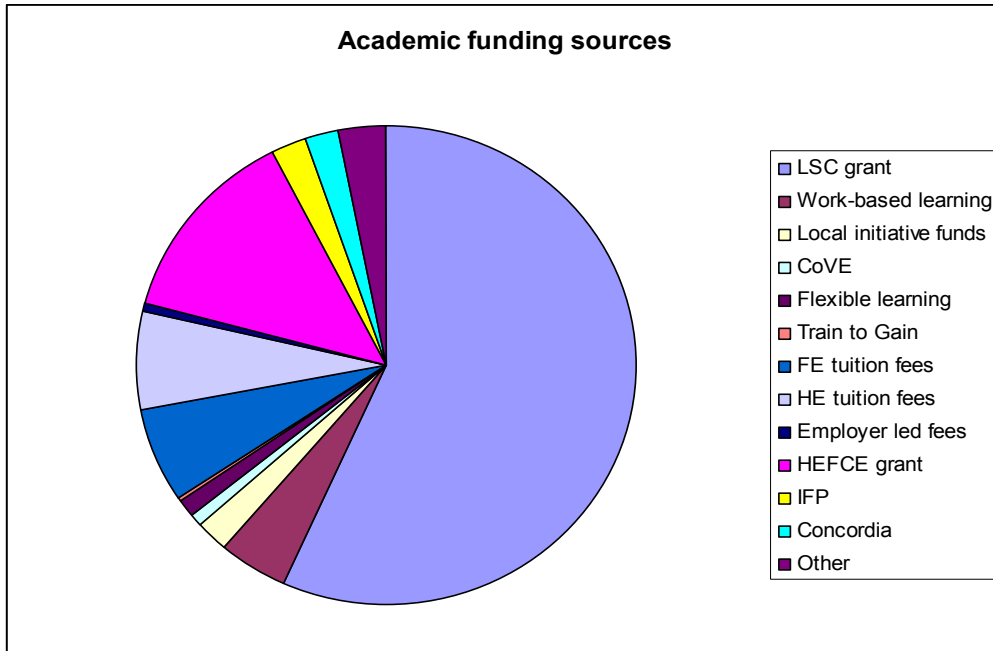
Ofsted carried out a full inspection of the College's FE provision in June 2007. Achievement and standards were rated as Outstanding, as were aspects of Every

Child Matters, and the College was rated as Good overall. The Commission for Social Care inspected our residential facilities during the year and found them to be excellent. There is a strong commitment throughout the College to lift the quality of our overall performance from Good to Outstanding by the end of 2008.



**Strong finances.....**

The College recorded an overall surplus of £222k in 2006/07. Virtually all our cash surplus during the year was recycled into new investment. Total capital expenditure more than doubled from £1,273k in 2005/06 to £3,011k in 2006/07, of which £2.2m was funded from the College's own resources. Overall income rose by 9% in 2006/07 compared with the previous year. During the year the College continued to be recognised by the Learning & Skills Council as a Grade A college in respect of its financial position.



## The College's farms and estate

The College's farms and estate provide a wide range of examples of farming and countryside management. Part of the estate is organic and areas have been included in the Countryside Stewardship Scheme. We are fortunate in having one of the largest farms of any land based college and our estate continues to offer a marvellous practical experience to our students. It also makes a valuable contribution to the College's income. Plumpton College at Netherfield has full access to a 100 hectare fully organic working farm plus two other local farms which we manage on contract for the owners. The College won several prizes at the South of England and Heathfield Shows for its livestock.

Over the past year we made many improvements to the estate, including:

- Development incorporating an extension to the dining room and new classrooms
- Installation of a second lift providing access to the first floor of the main building
- Construction of a new sustainable 'living classroom' at Ivyland Farm
- Purchase of a horticultural holding near Robertsbridge

A new state of the art Animal Care Unit incorporating veterinary nursing facilities and an operating theatre will be ready in early 2008. We are developing a cold-press oil facility and several of the College's fleet of vehicles are now fuelled by home-grown bio-diesel.

We have submitted a grant bid to the LSC for further major capital developments including a two storey extension comprising resources centre, bedrooms and offices, and the redevelopment of our workshops. At the time of writing we are awaiting a decision on this.

## The curriculum

We offer a wide range of FE, HE and full-cost business programmes via full-time, part-time and on the job education and training extending from entry level to degree level in the following broad curriculum areas:

horticulture	metalsmithing
floristry	equine studies
agriculture	machinery
animal management	countryside management
forestry & arboriculture	veterinary nursing
sport (outdoor education)	land based studies
gamekeeping	garden design
wine business	wine production
business management	

We also offer many short courses ranging from pesticide use to tractor driving and 'bespoke' courses designed to meet varied business needs.

## Student achievements in 2006/07

In addition to exam results, students' other achievements were once again wide-ranging and impressive during the year:

- National Diploma (ND) Forestry students ND Forestry students took part in a large treework project for Lewes Town Council in the Pells Park
- Forestry students at the Woodnet training room opening appeared on TV Meridian Tonight giving handling and processing demonstrations
- Forestry students put on a brilliant display at Weald Woodfair and demonstrated timber handling and sawmilling at the Woodland Enterprise Centre Open Day
- Forestry students represented the College at the ISA student tree climbing competition at Capel Manor College
- First Diploma Horticultural students planted up and maintained decorative areas at Plumpton Racecourse throughout the year
- Horticultural students were awarded a Silver Gilt medal for their show garden at the Royal Horticultural Society Hampton Court Show
- Floristry students provided a floral display at the Royal Pavilion for the University of Brighton graduation ceremony
- An NVQ2 Floristry student won a Gold Medal of Excellence from the C&G/NPTC
- An Advanced National Certificate in Floristry student won 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> prize for living body jewellery at the annual Society of Floristry show in Birmingham
- Advanced National Certificate in Floristry students spent a day teaching disabled school children at a careers and courses event arranged by Connexions in Hastings.
- Garden Design students took 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> places in the garden design/build competition at the South of England Show
- An NVQ level 3 Sportsturf student won the regional Greenkeeper of the Year competition
- Wine Studies students participated in the Decanter Magazine Grand Tasting
- Wine made by students won several medals at the South East Vineyards Association annual tasting event
- A former top Plumpton Wine student was accepted for PhD at Lincoln University in New Zealand
- Red wine made by Plumpton students won second prize for best wine at the South of England Show

- Agriculture students won top prizes at the Heathfield and South of England Shows with their displays and showing dairy cattle and pigs
- Agricultural students took part in the Institute of Agricultural Business Management competition
- ND Land Based Technology students won prizes at ploughing matches
- Equine students organised successful dressage and horse shows
- Students on various courses organised and went on study trips in the UK and abroad
- HE Animal Science and Countryside Management students went on a successful study field trip to South Africa
- The Metalsmithing students' entry was a centre piece in the 'young craftpersons' show at the South of England Show
- A copper garden sculpture/fountain made by Metalsmithing students won a Gold Medal at the Chelsea Flower Show
- Students won the inter-college UK Skills Agriculture /Countryside / Gamekeeping competition at Cannington
- An Outdoor Education student won overall best and fastest slalom skier on an educational trip to Clavier, Italy
- Five First Diploma Outdoor Education students climbed Mount Snowdon and reached the top in grueling weather to mark the end of their course - all students went on to achieve distinction on their course
- A Skills for Life student went to China as a member of the British Disabled Olympic Squad goodwill ambassadorial team
- Another Skills for Life student won gold in the South East Area trials for the British Disabled Olympic Squad
- College netball, rugby, hockey and football teams took part in the Berkshire College of Agriculture inter-land based college tournament, winning at football.
- Students' Rag Week raised £300, spent on sponsoring a child in Zambia and buying gifts for third world communities via the charity World Vision

### **Working with others**

- We organised 54 "taster" days at the College for over 600 schoolchildren
- 2,345 schoolchildren from 60 different schools visited the College farm
- We raised over £100k in charitable donations towards the cost of a new Children's Rural Education Centre
- We have been actively involved in the development of the new Land & Environment Specialised Diploma
- We offer our riding facilities to Riding for the Disabled
- We offer our sports hall and playing fields to local rural community sports organisations
- We provide a base for the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG), the Sussex Young Farmers' Club, and the East Sussex Proficiency Tests Council (who oversee the certification of several rural skills tests)
- We work in partnership with the Woodland Enterprise Centre at Flimwell
- We work closely with the University of Brighton to further develop our higher education provision
- 'Plumpton Plummeters' was established - the only FE college parachute school in the UK – in conjunction with the British Collegiate Parachute Association, Cloud Nine Sky diving school, and Joint Services Parachute Centre Netheravon

## Corporate governance

The Board of Governors is responsible for setting the strategic policy and overall direction of the College. Governors during 2006/07 were:

Mike Atkinson ( <i>Chairman</i> )	David James ( <i>Vice-Chairman</i> )
John Brooksbank ( <i>retired July 2007</i> )	Jeremy Burdett ( <i>retired March 2007</i> )
Julie Carr	Jeremy Courtney
Joanna Dulat ( <i>retired July 2007</i> )	David Evans
John Evans	Emma Hawkins ( <i>retired Sept 2007</i> )
Christine Howe	Judy Llewellyn-Burke
Richard Partridge	David Phillips
Neil Ravenscroft	Bob Stanier
Bryan Stevens	Denise Stokoe
Helen Vicary	Des Lambert ( <i>Principal</i> )

New Governors for 2007/08 are Julia Hadden, Tristan Marshall and Tom Gelling

The Senior Management Team during 2006/07 were:

- Des Lambert – Principal
- Geoff Gregory - Deputy Principal – Resources
- David Stokes - Deputy Principal – Academic & Quality
- Val Wilkinson – Director of Finance & Administration

We are committed to exhibiting best practice in all aspects of corporate governance and endeavour to conduct our business in accordance with the principles identified by the Committee on Standards in Public Life. A register of governors' interests can be viewed by arrangement with Marian Jones, Clerk to the Corporation. We work in the spirit of openness and any enquiries for information under the Freedom of Information Act should be directed to the Clerk.

## Equality of opportunity

We are committed to offering equality of opportunity for all. During the year around 1.6% of students and around 10% of staff classed themselves as other than white British. Around 18% of students and 2% of staff have self-declared a disability. We have already introduced many improvements to assist those with disabilities and have an action plan to meet our duties under the Disability Equality legislation.

**Open Day – Saturday 10 May 2008 10 am – 5 pm**

Visit our website: [www.plumpton.ac.uk](http://www.plumpton.ac.uk)

**Plumpton College, Ditchling Road, Plumpton, East Sussex, BN7 3AE**

*A4BC, CoVE, liP, & Matrix logos*