

## RE-INSPECTION OF BOLTON COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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### Outcome of Re-Inspection

The overall provision in leadership and management is now **satisfactory**.

### Background

Bolton Community College was inspected in October/November 2001. Inspectors from the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) and the Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) carried out the inspection under Section 62 of the Learning and Skills Act. The quality of provision was found to be satisfactory in all areas inspected, except in engineering, and hospitality and catering which were found to be unsatisfactory. Provision in these two curriculum areas was re-graded from unsatisfactory to satisfactory in April 2003. In addition leadership and management were also found to be unsatisfactory.

Ofsted and the ALI have particular duties in relation to colleges where their inspection report indicates that individual curriculum and/or work-based learning (WBL) areas are unsatisfactory or very weak or that leadership and management are unsatisfactory or very weak. Where a college has been judged to have less than satisfactory provision in any curriculum or WBL area, or less than satisfactory leadership and management, Ofsted or the ALI will visit the college to carry out monitoring inspections of the unsatisfactory areas. As a result of the re-inspection monitoring visits, inspectors may judge that the curriculum or WBL areas, or leadership and management, are satisfactory and that no further visits are required. Where leadership and management are satisfactory, all unsatisfactory provision will be re-inspected normally during one week.

If, after approximately 24 months, the college has not made sufficient progress to justify a judgement that the curriculum or WBL area or leadership and management are satisfactory, the original grade for the area that continues to be unsatisfactory will remain on the college's record until the next full inspection within the cycle. Ofsted will inform the local LSC that provision remains unsatisfactory and the reasons why.

### Dates of Re-Inspection Monitoring Visits

In accordance with the above procedures, re-inspection monitoring visits of leadership and management continued to take place on 14-15 June 2002, 19-20 November 2002, 1-2 April 2003 and 11-12 December 2003.

### Leadership and Management

Inspectors made the following judgement of leadership and management in the October - November

2001 inspection, which is recorded in Part A of the 2001 inspection report.

*Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. The new management team has begun to address the major problems it inherited, but it is too early to judge the effects of the action taken. Staff welcome the open and responsive management style that has been introduced and they feel better informed of the priorities the college has set. There have been improvements in teaching and learning. The quality and reliability of management data are still poor. Management in curriculum areas and in cross-college functions remains ineffective in some respects. The quality of experience which students gain varies significantly between different courses and curriculum areas. Too many students fail to complete their chosen course successfully. The process of self-assessment has been improved, but target setting is not fully established. The college's financial position is not yet secure and the risks associated with the recovery plan are significant. Governors now monitor the college's activity more carefully, although a number of items require closer attention.*

During the monitoring visits in 2002 and 2003, inspectors have assessed progress made in addressing the weaknesses in leadership and management. The overall evaluation by inspectors is that the college has taken appropriate action to address the weaknesses and that leadership and management are now **satisfactory**.

The accuracy of data on students' achievements has improved. Strategies to improve poor retention and pass rates have been effective: at levels 1 and 2 retention rates are above, and pass rates at, national averages in most cases. However, success rates for students aged 16-18 are still significantly below national averages for level 3. The management of quality improvement is rigorous: many course reviews include good data analysis; there has been much effective staff development; there are regular curriculum quality audits and progress against action plans is carefully monitored. Target setting is managed effectively and the targets for 2002/03 were largely met or exceeded. The management of work-based learning is rigorous: there are effective assessment and tracking procedures; employers are well informed on how to support and monitor the work of trainees and links between the work-based training unit and curriculum areas are good. Staff appraisal is effective: targets are carefully set to reflect strategic and areas of learning priorities and the support and training needs of appraisees are effectively identified during appraisal. The co-ordination of key skills, the delivery of tutorials and provision of basic skills support are well managed: there is a comprehensive tutorial handbook; the key skills and learning support teams work well together; the learning support provided is effective and students' progress is carefully monitored. Governance is now good: there is a highly experienced and well-qualified clerk; governors receive comprehensive and reliable information on the college's performance; the board membership reflects the ethnic mix of the community and the training needs of governors are appropriately addressed. The precarious financial position has improved: governors and senior managers receive clearly presented accounts and financial reports and a course costing model ensures that proposed courses are financially viable. The college's course costing model is easily understood, and applied, by course and programme managers. However, there are few employer surveys or advisory boards, though some are planned. Equal opportunities are effectively promoted and monitored: the college works well with relevant external agencies; there are equal opportunities champions in each area of learning and students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are increasingly enrolling onto mainstream courses.

There will be no further monitoring visits to the college because there are no remaining unsatisfactory areas.