

ANNUAL ASSESSMENT VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Name of College: City of Sunderland
Date of visit: 9 July 2007

This feedback contains brief findings from the annual assessment visit. It focuses on the themes explored during the visit and does not attempt to give a comprehensive overview of the college's performance.

Achievement and standards

Have success rates on long courses continued to improve?

- Overall success rates, for learners aged 16 to 18 and for adults, have improved steadily and in 2005/6 were both high. The level 3 success rate in 2005/6, for learners aged 16 to 18, was similar to that in 2004/5 and was close to the national average. At levels 1 and 2, for learners aged 16 to 18, and at all three levels for adult learners the success rates were high.
- The college no longer offers its own work based learning programmes but remains involved as a sub-contractor for a number of providers.
- The college continues to develop its data analysis and use of data to help continuous improvements. Currently managers are carrying out developmental work using in year retention and previous achievement rates in an attempt to produce a reliable forecast of success rates early in the year.

Is the college analysing data at appropriate levels of aggregation?

- Data is carefully analysed at appropriate levels of aggregation and the analyses are used to identify issues at sector subject area and course level.

Quality of education and training

Teaching and learning in the directorate of basic education and skills for life are judged to be consistently outstanding. How strong is the evidence to support this judgement?

- An appropriate variety of evidence is used to support the judgement that teaching and learning are outstanding. This includes the consideration of learners views, the high success and retention rates, lesson observation and the evaluation undertaken in course reviews of the management of learning, for example the use of information and learning technology (ILT) and the way learners are supported.
- Validation and moderation of the lesson observation process and the grades awarded are robust. Observers are shadowed by observers from different occupational areas to maintain consistency across the college and share good practice. External consultants are used to supplement the inspections of teaching and learning carried out within the college. Observations are carried out to a planned timetable giving the teachers to be observed opportunities to carefully plan and carry out their observed lesson and achieve a high grade. The observation system is the main method by which the college judges the quality of its teaching and learning.

The college judges that its contribution to the “Every Child Matters” (ECM) agenda is a strength. How well is this judgement supported by evidence?

- A more co-ordinated approach between the 5 centres has been organised. The college is also working more closely with partner schools. Shared events and the sharing of best practice are priorities. Enrichment development officers have been appointed to focus on ECM themes. Cross centre teaching and tutorial activities have taken place, focussing for example on managing money, understanding anti-bullying, enterprise education and wider key skills. Staff training on, for example, child protection issues has raised the profile of ECM themes.

What improvements have been made to the way learners’ progress is reviewed?

- At the previous inspection learner reviews were judged to be a weakness. Since then a number of actions have been implemented to improve their quality. An interim model was introduced to improve the reviews until a computer-based approach could be developed. This has entailed modified

paperwork, staff training about target setting, and ensuring more effective communication and closer monitoring of learners' progress. The college is currently developing an electronic 'Progress Review Plan' that will be accessible to all staff and learners, and provide useful information to parents and employers. This initiative is expected to be implemented from September 2007, with staff training scheduled for August 2007.

Leadership and management

How well is the college's intervention strategy implemented? How has this strategy impacted on the quality of provision?

- The intervention strategy has changed considerably. Previously any part of a curriculum area which was underperforming was taken out of the area and managed by a temporary team of managers until improvements were made. New managers at the college judged that this did not produce sustainable improvements and have replaced the intervention strategy with in house support for underperforming areas. Inspectors reviewed one area where support resulted improvements in retention and achievement. College staff in these areas were appreciative of the support provided.

Any themes from the pre-visit analysis not explored during the visit:

- None

Any other observations from the visit not identified in the pre-visit analysis:

- None