

# City of Bath College

## Partial re-inspection report

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**Unique reference number:** 130558

**Name of lead inspector:** Gloria Dolan HMI

**Last day of inspection:** 27 January 2011

**Type of provider:** General Further Education college

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## Introduction

City of Bath College was inspected in January 2010. Its overall effectiveness was satisfactory, grade 3. The sport, leisure, travel and tourism subject area was inadequate and has been re-inspected during this inspection. The subject area was found to have made significant progress at a monitoring visit in September 2010.

## Information about the provider

City of Bath College is a medium-sized general further education college. It is located in the centre of Bath and serves the city and the surrounding rural area of Bath and North East Somerset. The college offers courses in 15 subject areas. Many more students study at advanced level than at foundation or intermediate levels. The college offers apprenticeships and Train to Gain programmes. The proportion of learners from minority ethnic backgrounds, at 13%, is much higher than in the local population. The college has a franchise partner for mainly adult provision in sport and massage qualifications.

The outcome of the reinspection is as follows:

Subject area	Original grade	Re-inspection grade
Sport, leisure, travel and tourism	4	3

## Context

Two hundred and twenty-four students study courses in sport, leisure, travel and tourism including BTEC qualifications at foundation, intermediate and advanced levels. Most students are aged 16- to 18-years-old and study at advanced level. One hundred and eighty-one students study full-time courses and forty-three students, mainly adults, study short courses including personal fitness training, provided by a franchise partner.

## Key findings

- Outcomes for students are satisfactory. Success rates on short courses are high. Overall success rates on long courses improved significantly in 2009/10, but are five percentage points below average. The success rate on the first diploma in sport improved sharply to 13 percentage points above average in 2009/10; but the success rate on the national diploma in sport and exercise science is low.
- College data suggest that retention rates on courses during this academic year are high and retention is currently 100% on several courses. A much higher proportion of students progressed from Year 1 to Year 2 of the national diploma in sport and exercise science this year compared to last year. Students' average attendance this year is high and punctuality is good in most lessons.

- Students' work is at least satisfactory and it is good for some students including those on the intermediate course in travel and tourism. Written assignments and practical activities demonstrate clearly students' knowledge and understanding of their subjects. Students understand the importance of using good health and safety practices during practical lessons and they work safely.
- Students enjoy their lessons and feel safe at college. They make informed choices about adopting healthy lifestyles. Most students develop satisfactory skills for employment and some develop good skills in this area.
- Teaching and learning are good. In good and outstanding lessons students readily participate in a wide range of interesting learning activities and make good progress. Information learning technology is used effectively and innovatively. Learning is checked effectively. Written and oral feedback for students is clear and helps them to improve. However, feedback on written work does not always refer students to the requirements to achieve higher grades.
- Lesson planning is good across the department, and starter activities are well-focused and interesting. Students are often asked to evaluate their lessons and their progress. Students' literacy skills are developed well in many lessons. The few weaker lessons are not appropriately demanding for all students, explanations by teachers are overly long, and not all students are involved in answering questions when learning is being checked.
- The range of courses is satisfactory and provides clear progression routes to more advanced courses. Courses in sport are provided from foundation level to degree level. Enrichment activities are too limited and do not include sufficient work-related additional qualifications or work experience.
- The enhancement of learning through partnerships is satisfactory. Franchise arrangements provide successful short courses for students. Links with the University of Bath allow students to use the university's sports facilities. Visits to high performing colleges have resulted in better ways to encourage the learner voice. There are insufficient links with employers to benefit students by broadening the curriculum.
- Support for students is good. Initial information, advice and guidance for students have been strengthened and are good. A helpful pre-course assignment introduces students to the demands of the course. Support for students with academic and personal needs is good. Additional learning support is effective and provided promptly at the start of the course.
- A new electronic system to track students' progress has improved the effectiveness of monitoring their performance and attendance. Students frequently review their targets and progress towards meeting goals. Regular individual tutorials support students well in making progress through their courses and in reviewing their action plans for improvement.
- Leadership and management are good. Well-founded actions have been taken since the last inspection to improve success rates for students. Student attendance, punctuality and retention have improved well. Lessons are

monitored closely and the quality of teaching and learning has improved. The promotion of safeguarding is good. The promotion of equality in lessons is satisfactory.

- Self-assessment and improvement plans are well focused. Quality assurance processes for monitoring performance and implementing improvements are good and undertaken frequently. Course reviews are comprehensive. Arrangements to involve students in decision making and to act upon their views are satisfactory. Feedback received from students on teaching and assessment is taken seriously and acted upon by teaching teams.

### **What does City of Bath College need to do to improve further in sport, leisure, travel and tourism?**

- Improve success rates by ensuring that all lessons are appropriately demanding for individual students. Ensure that students are involved throughout lessons and that the learning of all students is checked effectively.
- Improve the standard of students' work by more consistently relating feedback on their written work to criteria for gaining merits and distinctions.
- Ensure that the curriculum best meets the needs of students and employers by improving links with employers and creating more opportunities for students to have work experience.

### **Additional Themes**

Inspectors explored the following themes as part of this re-inspection.

#### **Capacity to improve**

**What progress has been made in using self-assessment, improvement planning and quality assurance systems more effectively, so that managers identify weaknesses at an early stage and take swift action to tackle them?**

**Reasonable progress**

A strengthened focus on quality assurance and monitoring students' performance has been implemented across the college since the last inspection. Long qualification success rates for students of all ages improved at intermediate and advanced levels in 2009/10, but they declined at foundation level. A staff and management group was created promptly to assess performance, identify weaknesses and devise actions to improve success at foundation level. Staff recently received training focusing on the areas for improvement identified by the group, including behaviour management, making learning fun and strategies for effective learning. Several curriculum areas now share good practice through a new college project. Peer observations, as part of the project, both within and across departments, are well organised. Good practice, such as the use of information learning technology, is now adopted more widely. Departmental managers receive regular coaching from senior managers through frequent meetings to review their department's progress against a range of performance indicators. Action plans to improve performance are reviewed

systematically during these meetings. Previous quality assurance arrangements did not identify problems at foundation level in time to rectify them in 2009/10. Heads of department now participate in training appropriately focused on problems they encounter.

### **Outcomes for learners**

#### **What progress has been made in improving students' outcomes since the last inspection?**

**Reasonable progress**

The overall success rate for long qualifications improved by five percentage points in 2009/10 compared to 2008/09, to broadly average. However, the college's success rate in 2008/09 was lowered by a distance learning programme, since discontinued. The underlying long qualification success rate improved by three percentage points in 2009/10 and the college narrowed the gap with the national average by one and a half percentage points. Success rates improved well at intermediate and advanced levels for 16- to 18-year-old students to the national average. They improved well for adults to slightly above average at advanced level. The intermediate level success rate for adults improved significantly but was four percentage points below average. Success rates in 2009/10 declined sharply and were low at foundation level for students of all ages.

Success rates on Train to Gain and apprenticeships improved well and are high. Success rates on advanced apprenticeships declined and are low. Success rates between male, female and minority ethnic students overall are similar to the college average; but the success rate for minority ethnic students at advanced level is below the college average. Students receiving additional learning support have higher success rates than the college average.

### **Leadership and management**

#### **What progress has been made in improving links with employers to provide work-experience opportunities which enhance the curriculum in areas where it was underdeveloped?**

**Reasonable progress**

Since the last inspection work-related activities have been introduced in many areas and links with employers have improved to some extent. However, most students on vocational courses do not have work experience placements. Examples of relevant activities introduced since the last inspection include: beauty therapy students taking part in a promotional activity at a large high street store; hospitality students providing outside catering at a rugby club; and, business students organising a fashion show at a large event. Good examples of work experience are found in long-standing arrangements for health and social care and early years' students where work placements include well-structured activities. Stonemasonry students now work alongside experienced craftsmen on conservation and restoration projects. Music students record and promote artists and produce CDs at college and performing arts students tour primary schools with theatrical productions. Students studying sport,

tourism, engineering, hairdressing and carpentry, for example, do not have work experience. Feedback from employers who provide placements is not analysed centrally. Increasing numbers of students, over 50, are involved in volunteering activities such as with St John's Ambulance and a range of charities. A number of students have jobs, but this is not analysed or tracked by the college.

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