

# Bowling College

## Partial reinspection report

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**Unique reference number:** 58766

**Name of lead inspector:** Shahram Safavi HMI

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**Type of provider:** Independent learning provider

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## Introduction

Bowling College (the college) was inspected in November 2009. Outcomes for learners and the quality of provision were good. However, the college's overall effectiveness, capacity to make and sustain improvements, and leadership and management, were inadequate. During the reinspection, the college's overall effectiveness, capacity to improve, and leadership and management were inspected.

The outcome of the reinspection is as follows:

Aspect of the common inspection framework	Original grade	Reinspection grade
Overall effectiveness of provision	4	3
Capacity to improve	4	3
Leadership and management	4	3

## Context

1. Two of the four directors act as managing director and a deputy to the director; one is a financial director and the other supports the development of the company. Bowling College operates from five centres and employs 12 full-time and six part-time tutors. The college offers learner responsive and employer responsive provision in six subject areas. The majority of learner responsive provision is in preparation for life and work; all learners on employer responsive provision are on health, public services and care programmes. The reinspection reported on the progress which the college has made in improving the weaker aspects of its provision found at the previous inspection.

## Overall effectiveness

2. The overall effectiveness of Bowling College is satisfactory. Outcomes for learners continue to be good. Most learners demonstrate good confidence and improved self-esteem. The quality of provision continues to be good. However, targets set for work-based learners are insufficiently detailed and their progress is not always sufficiently monitored and recorded.
3. The college continues to provide clear, strategic management. It has maintained its satisfactory arrangements for safeguarding and the promotion of equality and diversity. Quality improvement arrangements have improved and the self-assessment process is now satisfactory. However, the pace of some improvement has been slow. For example, the leadership and management of work-based provision have not improved and some of the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection remain.

## Capacity to make and sustain improvement

4. At the previous inspection, the college's capacity to make and sustain improvement was inadequate. The quality system and self-assessment process have significantly improved. Quality arrangements are now more effective in identifying most areas for improvement. The college has made reasonable progress in improving a number of issues identified at the previous inspection. The managing director has introduced new arrangements to increase the pace of improvement significantly. These include weekly staff meetings, peer observation of teaching and learning, staff appraisal and the allocation of time for tutors to develop better teaching resources. However, the managing director and staff fully recognise the need to increase the pace of improvement further, and to develop more effective arrangements to manage the college's work-based provision.

## Leadership and management

5. The managing director continues to provide a clear strategy for developing the college's provision in line with both local and national priorities and the needs of the local community. Since the previous inspection, the managing director has reviewed the college's strategy, which now includes a stronger focus on demanding targets. The learner-responsive provision has successfully increased participation and exceeded the Skills Funding Agency's targets. However, the leadership and management of employer-responsive provision continue to be weaker than that of its learner-responsive provision.
6. The college continues to work very effectively with local partners to engage vulnerable learners. Its partnerships with volunteer sector services are particularly good. For example, the college has a well-established relationship with a voluntary housing organisation and provides literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) for vulnerable individuals who access the organisation's services. The vulnerable individuals include refugees, new arrivals to the country, those who are homeless, individuals with substance dependency and ex-offenders.
7. Arrangements for safeguarding learners are satisfactory. The recently updated safeguarding policies and procedures are detailed. Appropriate Criminal Records Bureau checks for staff are in place. Staff now have clear roles and understand their responsibilities. One of the staff is the named safeguarding officer. Staff have undertaken training in safeguarding. Learners are appropriately informed and report that they are confident to raise concerns.
8. The college continues to promote equality and diversity satisfactorily. It promotes its programmes to learners from the most disadvantaged backgrounds successfully. The college has reviewed its equality and diversity policies and procedures, and has trained its staff. Learners discuss their rights and responsibilities during their induction and gain appropriate information about how

to protect themselves against bullying and harassment. Whilst staff treat all learners with dignity and respect, the promotion of equality and diversity and the monitoring of learners' understanding of equality issues in work-based provision are insufficient. The college has recently surveyed the knowledge and experience of its entire staff about equality and diversity and has appropriate plans to provide all staff with further training.

9. At the previous inspection, the college's quality arrangements were inadequate. The self-assessment process was unsatisfactory. The college made insufficient use of learners' views to improve its provision. Since the inspection, the college has introduced new processes to improve the quality of its provision. In learner-responsive provision, tutors now produce very detailed course reviews and subject based self-assessment reports, which inform the college's overall self-assessment report well. The revised process for observing teaching and learning is more effective in identifying good practice and areas for improvement. The college has developed particularly effective ways of gathering and using learner feedback to improve its provision, for example, through the development of very confident student representatives. However, arrangements to use learners' views are less developed in work-based learning. Some aspects of the college's quality systems are still not fully developed and established. For example, the college does not monitor the quality of individual learning plans or learners' progress reviews sufficiently.
10. The college provides satisfactory value for money. Staff are appropriately qualified and the resources for teaching and learning are satisfactorily deployed. Learners speak highly of reasonably priced food and a welcoming learning environment. The college has effectively evaluated its accommodation strategy and now offers provision from two new venues, increasing the number of male learners who access ESOL courses. Staff have appropriate access to development and training; however, the quality of staff development activities does not always promote improvement effectively.

### **What does Bowling College need to do to improve further?**

- Improve the use of individual learning plans in work-based learning by ensuring that learners' targets are always realistic, precise and have clear completion dates.
- Improve the review of learners' progress in work-based learning by ensuring that learners' targets for improvement are clearly identified, recorded, shared with employers and monitored effectively.
- Monitor all aspects of the learning process and use information gathered, such as the information from course reviews and observations of teaching and learning, to develop action plans. Implement the actions in a timely manner and monitor their impact effectively.
- Improve the leadership and management of work-based learning by ensuring that the college has up-to-date expertise and experience.

## Additional Themes

Inspectors explored the following themes as part of this reinspection.

### Outcomes for learners

**Has the college maintained the good outcomes for learners in child development and well-being?**

**Reasonable progress**

At the previous inspection, overall success rates were high and learners developed good personal, vocational and employment skills. Many learners recruited to the programme start with low levels of prior attainment and significant barriers to learning. Bowling College has maintained the good outcomes for learners. Overall and timely success rates on intermediate level and advanced programmes are at or above national benchmarks. Learners make satisfactory progress in acquiring and developing a range of good employability and social skills such as confidence, communication, independence, listening and writing skills. Learners take responsibility for a variety of tasks in the workplace and work to a satisfactory professional standard.

### Quality of provision

**What improvements has the college made in improving the quality of teaching and learning for work-based learners?**

**Reasonable progress**

At the previous inspection, teaching and learning were satisfactory. The college has made reasonable progress in improving the quality of teaching and learning. Child care learners attend weekly lessons at the college for the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) background knowledge. Tutors now plan most lessons well and include a variety of activities which engage learners effectively. In the better lessons, learners contribute very effectively to discussions on improving their working practices. However, the linking of theory to practice in some lessons is insufficient. Health and social care learners do not attend off-the-job training but receive one-to-one training and support in the workplace from tutors. However, tutors do not sufficiently link learners' experience to their qualification during this training.

**What improvements has the college made for improving the use of initial assessment for work-based learners, and negotiating and setting realistic, precise and time-bound targets for them?**

**Insufficient progress**

At the previous inspection, the individual learning plans contained too little detail and tutors did not routinely update them. Following the inspection, college staff designed and developed a new individual learning plan, which all learners now complete during their induction. Learners undertake literacy and numeracy assessments and complete questionnaires about how they learn best. However, tutors do not use this information enough. Many individual learning plans are incomplete and do not contain clear plans for the completion of the qualification. Tutors do not link on- and

off-the-job training systematically nor do they provide sufficient or appropriate targets to help learners plan their progress. Many learners complete their individual learning plans independently, with little effective support from tutors. Individual learning plans contain few clear targets to monitor progress and achievement.

**What improvements has the college made in reviewing the progress of work-based learners?**

**Insufficient progress**

At the previous inspection, tutors did not monitor learner progress against clear targets; they offered learners insufficient guidance about how to progress. The college has offered a number of training sessions for its tutors on how to improve progress reviews. Tutors have revised the review documents to improve the recording of learners' progress. However, they do not systematically record learners' progress and do not offer learners clear written guidance on how to progress and improve. During the progress review meetings, tutors do not monitor and record learners' understanding of health and safety, safeguarding, and equality and diversity sufficiently. Employers are insufficiently involved in the reviews of learners' progress and do not receive a copy of the review document.

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