

ANNUAL ASSESSMENT VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Name of College: Lufton Manor
Date of visit: 4 October 2006

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

What improvements have been made to assessment and the recording of learners' progress? How consistently is this applied across the college?

- The college are building on existing systems to improve the assessment and recording of learners' individual progress. Baseline assessment now covers all areas of the curriculum including vocational areas and skills for life and is completed during the first half term. In addition to the existing initial numeracy and literacy assessment, the college is now developing more baseline assessment for the vocational elements of a learner's programme but this is at a very early stage of development.
- The new individual learning plans (ILPs) are far more holistic and cover all aspects of the learners' experiences. For example, they include literacy, numeracy and work-related targets. Progression is now tracked more thoroughly and backed up in a learner portfolio which all staff have access to - thus enabling them to better work with and support the learners. The college have developed a much more focussed approach to recording prior achievement which is recorded in a personal assessment record. New session plans have been introduced which clearly identify learning outcomes for all learners and differentiated practice for individual learners. Overall, the process that the learners go through is more clearly defined, captures the learners' prior experience and provides a programme that will better match their needs and interests. However, much of this work is in the development stage so at the time of the annual assessment visit (AAV) it was too early to judge the full effectiveness of this system.

What progress has been made towards developing RARPA?

- The college has just started to systemise its approach to Recognising and Recording Progress and Achievement (RARPA) with learners on work experience. The approach the college is taking clearly shows all the learning experiences of students and demonstrate distance travelled. The college also plan to use RARPA for the daily living skills sessions but this is at a very early stage of development and has not yet been implemented.

Quality of education and training

How effectively has the college addressed the issues identified in health and safety management? What specific action has been taken to ensure learners are able to work in a safe environment?

- The college has made very good progress in this area since the inspection in January. A restructure was implemented after the inspection and a full-time manager to lead on health and safety was appointed who reports directly to the senior management team. The new health and safety manager is National Examination Board in Occupational Safety and Health (NEBOSH) trained and works closely with the health and safety assets manager for the whole of Mencap and together they are developing a common framework to use across all of the three Mencap colleges.
- The health and safety manager has established a health and safety review team with representation from across all areas of the college. The team have a clear remit which focuses on the health, safety and welfare of learners and staff. The college developed an action plan following the inspection and developed a new policy statement. The action plan has been closely monitored by both the deputy principal and the health and safety manager to ensure implementation.
- Risk assessments have been developed to cover all aspects of the colleges work. A new scheme covering all teaching sessions and focussing on how teachers risk assess working with students is in the process of being piloted. Teaching staff interviewed during the annual assessment visit report that the system is working well. It has enabled teachers to identify and plan for risks not previously considered.
- A coherent staff training programme has been developed. The starting point was a questionnaire for all staff to complete. The results were then used to identify what training needed to be put in place. There is now a rolling programme of training. Currently thirty staff are involved, fifteen are completing the health and safety module and fifteen are completing the fire module.

Leadership and management

At the last inspection, the college did not have a permanent senior management team in place and accountabilities were unclear. How have any changes improved this picture and what impact has this had on the leadership and direction of the college? Is there a clear rationale for how to take the college forward post inspection?

- Since the last inspection, a new permanent principal has been appointed along with several new key senior managers. This team is working well together and are clear about what is needed to improve provision further. The appointment of a senior post for quality is due to be made by October 2006. There has been a conscious effort by senior managers to be more visible around the college to both staff and learners. The direction of the college is now clear and good progress has been made in a short space of time to improve the provision for learners.
- Significant changes to the structuring of the curriculum and timetables have resulted in more individualised programmes of study which more accurately meets learners' needs. All learners now have a clear fixed entitlement including access to information technology (IT). Partly in response to parental feedback, the curriculum has been extended to Saturday mornings and includes a range of social activities and clubs including sports, arts and drama which are highly valued by students. In addition, the curriculum has been expanded to include opportunities for learners to study business administration. The introduction of a 'business bureau' gives learners the chance to work in a realistic office environment, developing skills in general administration and customer care.
- Middle managers and senior staff have been allocated clearer roles and levels of responsibility. To address previous issues of inconsistencies and non-compliance, regular audits are held by senior managers every half term. These audits are encouraging staff effectively to have higher aspirations. Overall, changes made over the last nine months are beginning to show signs of positive impact. There is now a clear rationale for taking the college forward.

What progress has been made against the college's post inspection action plan (PIAP)? Are targets clear, realistic and regularly monitored?

- The plan is a comprehensive document with clear and realistic outcomes. The document is regularly monitored and any progress made is updated each month. A summary of progress is shared more with governors every six weeks. Staff are informed of progress weekly through a principals

bulletin. However, a number of the targets outlined in the PIAP, miss the opportunity to quantify outcomes to enable the college to more easily measure and demonstrate progress.

How has the college strengthened its quality assurance procedures?
Are there measurable signs of improvement?

- Arrangements for quality assurance have improved. At strategic level, quality assurance is much more robust and cohesive. Changes to senior management and the governing body reporting systems have enabled managers and governors to more effectively monitor performance. Overarching systems across the college are more formalised. A number of these changes are beginning to demonstrate measurable improvement. For example, the better linking of funding, accommodation and curriculum strategies has led to improvements in individual learner experience. For example, the number of behavioural related incidents has fallen by around 85% compared to the same time last year. Learners spoke extremely positively about their increased weekend activities.
- Staff training is now more clearly linked to the college's PIAP outcomes. All staff have weekly training sessions timetabled and an extra eight cross-college training days have been allocated for this academic year. Improvements have also been made in some aspects of the management information system (MIS), in accommodation and in the increased moderation of teaching and learning using external observers. Learners' achievements are more actively celebrated around the college. In addition, parent views are now formally sought through regular parent forums which are attended by a member of the governing body. Comments are then used constructively to plan further improvements.
- Quality assurance at operational level remains variable which is identified in the college's self-assessment report (SAR). The SAR process does not yet involve staff fully at all levels, although this is being reviewed for 2006/07.
- The college are now Race Relations Amendment Act (RRA) 2000 and Special Education Needs Disability and Discrimination Act 2001 (SENDA) compliant. Appropriate child protection procedures are in place.

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

- Since the last inspection the college have built a spacious, student centred refectory and have addressed many essential maintenance issues. Two new temporary classrooms are in place and dedicated to 'Skills for Life'. Signage around the site has improved.