

## ANNUAL ASSESSMENT VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Name of College: City College Coventry

Date of visit: 18 September 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

How well do learners achieve?

- The overall college success rate improved by 11% between 2002/03 and 2004/05, compared with an increase in the national average of 8% over the same period. In 2004/05 the overall college success rate was 70%. This was significantly below the national average of 72%.
- Success rates for 16-18 year olds in 2004/05 were significantly above the national average at level 1, similar to the national average at level 2, and significantly below the national average at level 3. Success rates have improved since 2002/03 by 15%, 13% and 11% at levels 1, 2 and 3 respectively. The overall success rate for 16-18 year olds in 2004/05 was 65% which was similar to the national average of 66%.
- Success rates for adults in 2004/05 were significantly above the national average at level 2, but significantly below the national averages at levels 1 and 3. Success rates have improved since 2002/03 by 14%, 4% and 7% at levels 1, 2 and 3 respectively. The overall success rate for adults in 2004/05 was 71% which was significantly below the national average of 74%.
- Work-based learning data indicates that overall success rates for apprenticeships are much improved in recent years, having increased from 31% in 2003/04 to 56% in 2005/06. The overall success rate in 2005/06 was above the national average of 50%. Timely success rates for apprenticeships have also improved slightly, but were 5% below the national average in 2005/06.
- Value-added and distance travelled indicators suggest that most learners achieve in line with expectations based on their prior attainment.
- At the time of the annual assessment visit in September 2006, a significant proportion of qualification outcomes for 2005/06 have yet to be

confirmed. It is, therefore, difficult to make many judgements about learners' achievements in this period. Nevertheless, there is sufficient information to state that success rates for GCSE, AS and A2 qualifications will be higher than in 2004/05. It is likely that the trend of improving success rates in the college in recent years will have continued in 2005/06.

## Quality of education and training

What actions have been taken to improve the key skills provision and what has been the impact of these actions?

- The college has successfully introduced a number of initiatives to improve its key skills provision.
- Following the identification of ineffective key skills provision in some curriculum areas, the college undertook an analysis and review of key skills across its sites. It has since put a number of initiatives in place. The key skills strategy, updated in September 2006, now includes reference to learners working towards Skills for Life qualifications prior to working towards building a key skills portfolio of evidence. The college has increased its use of on-line testing following a successful pilot programme in the motor vehicle area. Heads of School have carried out a detailed analysis of key skills teaching. They have identified all staff involved in the planning and teaching of key skills, and training needs have been analysed. The college has recently introduced a detailed programme of training and development sessions for staff, covering the evidence needed to meet the requirements of key skills qualifications together with a session on assignment writing. The college has further developed its management information systems so that completion of evidence portfolios and success in tests are recorded on the same system giving a clearer indication of the overall rate of success. A more integrated approach to the teaching and learning of key skills continues to be developed, with closer involvement of key skills staff and vocational staff in the planning of provision.
- Achievement of key skills qualifications has increased over the last twelve months, particularly in the school of construction. The achievement of apprenticeship frameworks for work-based learners has also improved significantly.

## Leadership and management

Has the college maintained and improved its accommodation and specialist resources? In particular, how good are the ILT resources and specialist equipment for learners with learning disabilities?

- The college has continued to improve its specialist resources. It builds well on existing arrangements with local organisations to provide a high level of equipment to benefit learners. There is particularly good development of ILT resources. Of the 150 classrooms, over half are now fitted with interactive whiteboards or data projectors. Staff are encouraged to transfer their learning resources such as overhead projector slides onto multi-media equipment. The college adheres well to its policy of having up-to-date, industry standard software, suitable for the needs of the learners, staff and employers.
- The college caters well for learners with specific learning needs. For example, voice recognition software not only enables learners with literacy learning needs to develop their writing skills, but also enables learners with dyslexia to hear their text dictated back to them. Magnification software, provided by the college, allows visually impaired learners greater access to ICT resources. The college is developing systems to allow this software to be automatically loaded onto any computer in response to individual need. The college has a good ratio of computers to learners, which is significantly higher than the average for the West Midlands as a whole.
- The college places much emphasis on staff training. It is continuing to develop the Learning Lab, a learning resource within the college dedicated to the development and implementation of new teaching resources. College staff use the Learning Lab well to become familiar with new computer hardware and software, in particular the use of interactive whiteboards in the classroom.
- The college has maintained the good standard of accommodation at its existing premises whilst waiting for the completion of the new, purpose-built college. The first phase of this project is ahead of schedule to open in September 2007, providing accommodation for many of the courses currently offered at the Tile Hill and Maxwell sites. The second phase is scheduled to open in September 2008, providing accommodation for the remainder of the Tile Hill courses and courses run from the Butts Lane site. Much thought has gone into the detailed planning for the new

development ensuring the inclusion of many features over and above those required by current legislation relating to disability.

What actions have been taken to improve the provision in sport and recreation and what has been the impact of these actions? Using this area as an example, has the college improved its use of measurable criteria to monitor action plan progress?

- Improvements have been made in the use of measurable criteria to monitor action plan progress since the previous annual assessment visit (AAV) in December 2005. However, these improvements are not consistent across all action plans.
- The quality framework has been reviewed since the previous AAV. Better use is being made of learners' performance data to inform course self-assessment reports. A more comprehensive approach to gathering the views of learners had been implemented. Validation of course self-assessment reports is now timed more appropriately to improve the rigour of the whole college report.
- The curriculum area of sport and recreation was judged to be satisfactory in the 2003/04 self-assessment report. However, a decline in the quality of provision and weak implementation of the action plan contributed to this area being judged as inadequate in the self-assessment report for 2004/05. Most of the areas for improvement identified in the report pertained to one course – the national diploma in sport and recreation.
- A new curriculum co-ordinator for sport and recreation was appointed in November 2005 and several staff in the area completed teaching qualifications in 2005/06. Senior managers within the college have reinforced the importance of staff within sport and recreation complying with quality procedures. This has lead to better use of the disciplinary procedures for learners and more effective use of tutorials. Sport and recreation is one of the curriculum areas in which the use of quantitative success criteria improved the monitoring of the action plan in 2005/06. Two new courses were introduced in 2005/06.
- A number of issues in the 2005/06 action plan have been addressed and the college has judged performance on the new courses to be satisfactory. However, in July 2006 concerns about the retention and attendance of learners has lead to the national diploma in sport and recreation as being a course categorised as requiring special measures. The category of special measures involves a course being subjected to

more intense quality monitoring and support from staff in the quality unit in order to improve the provision. Previous examples of other curriculum areas being subjected to special measures have led to improvements.

- Improvements in the provision of additional learning support throughout the college has had a significant impact in sport and recreation. Guidance from senior managers and staff in the quality unit has also proved beneficial. There is now greater compliance with college procedures and the new courses have been introduced successfully. Overall attendance in the curriculum area is satisfactory. The provisional self-assessment grade for sport and recreation for 2005/06 is grade 3 (satisfactory).
- In future quality reviews, the college is considering categorising some courses as 'causes for concern' on the basis of their performance. This process would be informed by the robust and comprehensive performance data held by the college. The courses categorised as 'causes for concern' would be provided with additional support within the school and from the quality unit in order to improve the provision. Closer monitoring of staff may also be used to ensure compliance with college systems. The aim of these actions would be to ensure that the provision in these courses would be improved before it was considered to require the more robust intervention of 'special measures', or before it was judged to be inadequate during self-assessment.