

## ANNUAL ASSESSMENT VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Name of College: Great Yarmouth College  
Date of Visit: 13 November 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

Success rates for the significant number of students undertaking national vocational qualifications (NVQs) level 2 provision were low in 2003/04 and 2004/05. What happened in 2005/06, and to what extent has this issue been addressed at curriculum level?

- In 2005/06, overall success rates improved to close to the 2004/05 national average for students aged 16 to 18 on level 2 provision. For students aged 19+, the overall success rate was also close to the 2004/05 national average. College data, though incomplete at the time of the visit, indicate a significant overall improvement in NVQ level 2 success rates from below to above national averages.

Retention of the large number of students on level 3 provision declined in 2004/05. The decline was larger for students aged 16 to 18 than for those aged 19+. What happened in 2005/06, and to what extent has this issue been addressed at curriculum level?

- Retention rates for students on level 3 provision improved for students of both age groups in 2005/06. However, they remain below the 2004/05 national average for those aged 16 to 18. The college has a number of mechanisms to improve retention including learning mentors and containment plans for those courses in which retention is a problem. Admission criteria are now better defined and more appropriate to the demands of courses. For some programmes, for example in hairdressing, the provision of an introductory curriculum to feed into mainstream courses has improved retention and hence success rates.

Success rates for key skills improved markedly in 2004/05 to significantly above the national averages for all levels. Did this trend continue in 2005/06?

- Success rates for key skills remained significantly above the 2004/05 national average in 2005/06.

The last annual assessment visit (AAV) identified that the use of value-added measures to evaluate progress was underdeveloped. Is this still the case?

- The college has developed the use of value-added (VA) measures significantly since the last AAV. Where possible, students are given targets based on national VA predictions and progress is evaluated against them. The college makes extensive use of data in this process, although it has only done so recently.

The last AAV identified that, whilst work-based learning success rates have improved, too few learners completed their frameworks within the expected timescale (timely success rates). What happened in 2005/06?

- The college has improved timely success rates over the last three years. Rates have been, respectively, 23%, 31%, and 34% for the three years to 2005/06. This last is higher than the 2004/05 national average. The overall success rate has also improved from 49% in 2004/05 to 52% in 2005/06.

## Quality of education and training

The last AAV identified improvements to the monitoring of student progress, but the quality and monitoring of individual learning plans (ILPs) was not consistent. To what extent has this been addressed?

- The quality and consistency of ILPs has improved. New standardised ILP proformas are used throughout the college and their consistency is monitored by team leaders. Students confirm that they have clear targets and are aware of what steps they need to take to improve.

What developments has the college undertaken to improve teaching and learning? Has the lesson observation system been subject to external moderation?

- The college has been active in further developing teaching and learning since the last AAV. External and internal moderation of both observation grades and developmental points has been undertaken. Lesson observations have been analysed and a good programme of developmental events arranged to address identified issues. The college now aims to improve those lessons graded as satisfactory to good. Staff feel well supported in the development of their teaching.

The self assessment report (SAR) mentions that the college has been responsive to shortages in marine skills. How effective has this response been?

- The college has responded well to local needs for marine skills, notably boatbuilding. The college currently has 45 apprentices in boatbuilding and marine engineering and plans are in hand to further develop this provision.

Skills for Life provision is identified as a strength in the SAR. Is it?

- Achievements on skills for life provision are high. For example, the proportion of learners achieving a certificate in adult literacy at level 1 has improved steadily in recent years. The college has made further improvements by effectively embedding skills for life and key skills within vocational areas and increasing the extent to which these skills are contextualised. The college has made arrangements within the local area to bring skills for life training into industry, for example to a local hospital and bus company.

The SAR identifies good support for learners. How does the college evaluate the effectiveness of the support it provides?

- The college does not routinely evaluate the effectiveness of the support it provides, though it does undertake student perception surveys. Comparisons are not made between the success of students who receive support and those who do not. The college does not have

precise indications of those areas in which support is most and least effective.

## Leadership and Management

How well is the college progressing towards having a fully qualified workforce?

- The college is progressing well towards having a fully qualified workforce. Some 95% of teaching staff are currently either qualified as teachers or working towards a qualification. In some areas all teachers are fully qualified.

The SAR recognises some underperforming provision. How effectively is underperforming provision identified and issues addressed?

- Underperforming provision is identified effectively. The college uses achievement data, feedback from students and self assessment information in a cycle of performance monitoring and improvement. In those examples examined, the process was effective in driving up standards. For example the national diploma in mechanical engineering was subject to this process and showed a significant improvement in success rates last year.

How effectively is good practice identified and shared?

- The sharing of good practice is well developed. Use of the intranet and a range of meetings are effective in sharing identified good practice and improving poor practice. The staff training week focused on improving classroom practice. Industrial updating is comprehensive and well reported so that experiences are shared.

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

- The use and development of the college's intranet and management information systems has improved significantly since the last visit.
- The college has recently been awarded a regional training award for entry to employment (E2E) provision.