

## ANNUAL ASSESSMENT VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Name of College: City of Bristol College  
Date of visit: 7 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

Have success rates improved for students of all ages in 2005/06?

- Success rates on long courses at levels 1, 2 and 3 have remained close to or slightly above the national average for students of all ages.
- Success rates for key skills at level 1 have risen over the last three years from 27% to 40% in communication and from 38% to 56% in application of number. At level 2, the improvement in the communication key skill has been less impressive, increasing from 30% to 35%. Success rates declined from 39% to 34% in application of number at level 2. At level 3, success rates are very low in communication, application of number and information technology. Success rates in information technology at level 1 have improved over the last three years overall but declined from 50% to 44% in 2005/06. They are very low at level 2.

What are the success rates in WBL and ACL?

- Overall success rates for all apprenticeships have risen in the three year period to 2005/06. Framework completion has improved from 26% in 2003/04 to 39% in 2005/06 according to incomplete period 12 data. In retail and commercial enterprise, success rates for apprentices in hairdressing have improved from 45% in 2003/04 to 58% in 2005/06 and the number of apprentices has doubled. Similarly in construction, planning and the built environment, success rates for advanced apprentices have risen from 3% in 2003/04 to 37% in 2005/06. Timely success rates have risen in line with national rates. The college monitors each part of the learners' framework closely. The college has an overall success rate target of 60% for 2006/07.

- Most retention rates on adult and community learning courses are high and many have improved since 2004/05. The numbers of learners have almost doubled. According to the college's own data for 2005/06, pass rates for these courses are generally very high.

Have declining success rates in the few areas identified at the last inspection been successfully tackled?

- Improvements have been made to the success rates, by between 2% and 10%, in most areas that were underperforming at the last inspection. Data are incomplete but indications are that almost all areas' success rates are at or above the national average.

Are students taking graded qualifications at level 3 making at least the progress expected based on their results at GCSE?

- ALIS results show that students make positive progress overall but the amount of progress made is not statistically significant. It is within the normal range based on students' previous results at GCSE.

## Quality of education and training

Has teaching been strengthened effectively to meet the individual needs of learners?

- Since the last inspection the college has sought to improve how well the individual needs of learners are met. Suitable college-wide training for all teachers on meeting individual needs has been provided as well as targeted training for particular faculties. An extra 30 people have been trained to observe lessons and focus more sharply on this area of teaching. Meeting individual needs is consistently built into all lesson observation record forms. Two staff are dedicated to supporting teachers' development of E-learning skills. There is more sharing of good practice between curriculum areas and several areas are now working together on preparing appropriate resources.

Are enrichment activities in sport available to all full-time learners?

- Good arrangements have been made to promote healthy living and increase physical activity amongst students. A full-time co-ordinator has

been appointed to liaise with students and promote and organise a range of activities such as pilates, football and swimming according to the facilities available at each campus. Activities are designed carefully to be fully accessible to all students, including those with limited or restricted abilities. Take-up of activities is high and many students purchase activity passes to gain discounts on external gym membership and leisure trips.

Is information, advice and guidance and support for learners provided effectively in the community?

- At the last inspection, the provision of support for some learners including those studying part-time at community sites was not always provided in good time. The college has strengthened its overall support arrangements. It has held a number of productive development days for its community partners which identified the type and amount of support learners are entitled to in the community. The college has mechanisms to review jointly with community partners the quality of support provided to part-time learners. An evaluation was undertaken of the support arrangements in place for the new adult and community learning contract. In some cases, learners' needs have been re-assessed and teaching adapted to meet their needs better. The college acknowledges that it still needs to improve support arrangements at some of its partner sites. It has strengthened its procedures to provide more timely support to learners at its main sites.

## Leadership and management

How effectively is the performance of any underperforming groups monitored?

- The college systematically monitors the performance of students from different ethnic backgrounds. Actions are put in place, including support from learning mentors, which improve student success. Improvements to success rates have been made in many areas. An analysis of student performance by ethnicity is also undertaken at curriculum level and the progress made by them is checked regularly. The college does not analyse student success by gender. Female students generally have higher success rates in 2004/05 than male students, particularly for those aged 16-18.

How effectively is the quality of 14-16 provision monitored and improved?

- A specialist unit systematically co-ordinates and monitors the college's large 14-16 provision. There are approximately 1000 learners who attend on a part-time basis and a further 150 learners following an alternative curriculum full-time at college. An overarching self-assessment report is produced annually along with an action-plan for improvements. The evidence base used for the self-assessment report is not sufficiently comprehensive. The college has identified that it needs to increase the number of lesson observations for 14-16 provision in order to evaluate teaching and learning more effectively. Progression rates onto full-time courses post 16 are good for those on a full-time alternative programme. Sixty-four per cent of full-time and fifty-four per cent of part-time students progress onto full-time college provision.

How much progress has the college made in developing learning pathways for 14-19 year old learners?

The college has already developed clear learning progression pathways for 14-19 year olds with a group of six schools through the Kingswood Partnership. Entry criteria have also been agreed jointly. The college works regularly with 38 schools overall. It is making progress in developing joint arrangements for the specialised diplomas and learning pathways, through four separate partnerships. Vocational provision at college has enabled schools to broaden their KS4 curriculum.

How much progress has been made in implementing the Skills for Life strategy?

- The college has made good progress in its implementation of the skills for life strategy. It has strengthened the links between programme and learning and language development coordinators. It has improved the quality of skills for life targets derived from initial assessment results on individual learning plans and has analysed the impact of these targets on

results. It has shared examples of good practice across the college. At the time of the visit, 37 teachers had achieved specialist literacy and numeracy qualifications at levels 3 and 4. The range of skills for life qualifications has been consolidated. Learner numbers have increased over the three year period from 7592 in 2003/04 to 9091 in 2005/06. According to college data, success rates for skills for life qualifications at level 1 are slightly above national rates for learners aged 16 to 18 and significantly above for those aged 19 and over. The college has implemented a number of actions to improve the literacy and numeracy skills of all its staff and has ensured that judgements on elements of the skills for life strategy are included in each faculty's self-assessment report.

How effectively is the college implementing RARPA?

- The college has made slow progress on its implementation of arrangements for the recognising and recording of progress and achievement (RARPA) in non-accredited provision. It has devised a strategy statement which details how RARPA will be implemented. Some learners have completed individual learning plans. The college acknowledges that it still has much work to do to prepare its partner providers for RARPA. It has not yet evaluated the quality of its RARPA arrangements.