ANNUAL ASSESSMENT VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Name of College: Chichester College
Date of visit: 28 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

How effective are plans to improve the rate of progress in raising achievement and standards? How are these being monitored??

- There has been overall improvement and the college data for 2005/06 show:
    - The overall success rate of the college as 77% compared to the national average of 65% for general further education colleges. Long courses are 71% overall and short courses 88%.
    - Success rates on level 3 courses for students aged 16-18, the biggest area of provision, are 68% which is broadly at the national average.
    - An overall increase in success rates for students aged 19 and above from 2004/05 to 2005/06 at level 1 and level 2 placing performance above the national average.
    - There are still retention issues on some courses, for example Engineering and Construction, which the college improvement plan has recognised as areas for urgent attention.
    - Value added data on level 3 courses and distance travelled information show that students' performance is broadly in line with national averages.
- There is close monitoring of the improvement plans and progress of all course performance, particularly those of concern through the Attendance, Retention and Achievement (ARA) programme. Higher achievement and standards are being pursued vigorously through the Chichester College Excellence Programme.
- The college is now using current benchmarks to assess performance, having addressed this following last year's AAV.

Low success rates on 'other' provision and 'continuing' learners
- The college explain that low success rates on 'other' provision is due to incorrect coding and entry of end dates for 500 students with learning difficulties and disabilities who were enrolled on 5 year programmes in 2001. This is being dealt with now.
- Some 'other' provision has poor pass rates due to inappropriate use of additionality on some courses.
- The issue of 'continuing students' has been largely resolved through the tighter controls on registration, a review of end dates and withdrawals. The figure has been reduced from 1000 to 180.

Attendance
- Attendance has risen. Programme managers and teachers are able to give accurate figures for their own areas. Overall college attendance is 88% compared to 80% for the same period last year. Absences are followed up effectively.

Further Improvement of framework completions in work-based learning (WBL), particularly timely achievement
- The overall success rate for frameworks at all levels has improved significantly from 38% in 2004/05 to 52% in 2005/06, and is now just above the national average. The success rate for apprenticeships is above the national average at 56%. However, progress to improve the overall success rates for the smaller numbers of advanced apprentices has been slower.
- Timely success rates have improved overall from 17% in 2004/05 to 31% in 2005/06, just above the national average. Timely success rates have improved on apprenticeship programmes between 2004/06 from 14% to 33%, which is just above the national average.
- Many learners are now making good progress to achieve their framework, although there are still variations between areas. Effective actions have been taken to improve the coordination and integration within the management of work-based learning.

How effective are plans to improve Key Skills further?
- Between 2003/05, key skills success rates were well above national averages at all levels and for all age groups. The overall success rate was 55%. In 2005/06, the overall success rate fell to 38%. There are wide variations in key skills success rates across the college. For example, they are above average in animal care, social care, childcare and hair and

beauty but poor in motor vehicle, construction, travel and tourism and on Advanced level courses. Success rates are low in level 1 communications and application of number key skills, where attendance and achievement rates for external tests have been poor in some parts of the college.

- To address the variations in performance, the college has integrated entry level 3 literacy and numeracy qualifications with all entry level and level 1 courses across the college. It is also using the ARA process to improve the achievement by monitoring plans and sharing good practice in key skills delivery and assessment, although the impacts of this are not yet visible in the data.
- The college has improved its arrangements to support learners with additional learning needs to pass external key skills tests.

Quality of education and training

Impact of the Chichester College Learning Model for improving teaching and learning.
- The Chichester College Learning has had a significant impact on improving teaching and learning and ensuring that students and learning are at the centre of college activities. It has:
    - Formalised good teaching and learning practices
    - Given structure and direction to lesson planning and how lessons are delivered
    - Re-emphasised the importance of sound assessment practices
    - Encouraged teachers to reconsider how they use language and technical terms when teaching.

- The impact is that observations of teaching and learning show greater use and awareness among teachers of their teaching craft and the grade profiles show a rise in the number of good lessons. The students reported that they like knowing the aims and direction of lessons and the follow-up. They also said that teachers explain things in terms they can understand.

Improvements in consistency and quality of tutorials
- Consistency of tutorial support on advanced level courses is being effectively addressed by the introduction of the A level Student Tutors. The introduction of mentors and the formalised process of tutorial and subject reviews are having a positive impact. However, the quality of formal group tutorials is inconsistent. The college is aware of this and is planning how to quality assure and improve this.

- Target setting through the tutor system is being systematically developed. The college is making good progress on ways to use value added information from the A Level Information System and the New Measures of Success to encourage students to improve their performance, but there is still further work to ensure that staff fully understand the chances graphs and data. Most of the students know their targets, which vary from precise minimum grades to more general improvement ones. However some targets do not give enough specific detail on how students can improve.

Progress in using data to inform lesson planning, target setting and judgements about progress of students.

- Good progress is being made in tracking students. The introduction of the 'Information Desk Top' across the college has been received positively and is being used effectively to track students' progress and attendance. Improved lesson planning has been a key outcome of the Chichester College Learning Model, though using student specific data in lesson planning is underdeveloped. Developing the use of information and communication technology (ICT) further in teaching and learning is an area for development.

Leadership and management

Impact of the change in management of WBL on improving quality and achievements.

- The management of work-based learning has improved. The integration of apprenticeships with curriculum areas across the college is good. Framework co-ordinators monitor learners' progress well and take effective actions to ensure that learners' achievements are timely. The co-ordinators have clear development plans to improve overall and timely success rates and have a good awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of each apprenticeship programme.
- Employers value the commitment by the college to develop apprenticeship programmes which meet their particular needs.

Progress in developing and improving curriculum planning and management and the use of data

- The roles of programme managers are being clarified and the programme managers were clear on the difference between their strategic and management roles as a result of staff development undertaken. The Chichester College Excellence Programme is having a positive impact in improving communications, examples of which are:
  - The introduction and use of 'Quickbite' to tackle problems early and spread good practice
  - 'Spotlight', Weekly curriculum team meetings, led by Advanced Practitioners and curriculum managers to improve teaching and learning
  - Use of the weekly publication, Chichester Matters, to focus on current issues and also spread good practice.

- Data are being used more effectively to inform curriculum judgements and monitoring through the ARA process. Examples of improvements made as a result of the ARAs are:
  - The timetable was revised in Beauty and Holistic Therapy to tackle poor attendance and a bridging course was introduced to facilitate entry to the BTEC programme.
  - Changes to programmes at the Brinsbury Campus resulted in better attendance and retention.

- Staff were positive about the access to and the timeliness of data through the Information Desk Top.

Any themes from the pre-visit analysis not explored during the visit:
- The themes were all explored.