

ANNUAL ASSESSMENT VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Name of College: Eastleigh
Date of visit: 4 December 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 are the success rates for 2005/06? What areas/levels/ages in particular have shown improvement or decline and why? Did retention improve on level 3 courses?

- College data, which is not yet quite complete for the year, show that success rates are likely to have risen in 2005/06 at all levels for both age groups. For students aged 16 to 18, they have risen at level 1 by 1 percentage point, at level 2 by 11 percentage points, and at level 3 by 3 percentage points. These are all above or well above national averages for 2004/05. For adult students, they have risen at level 1 by 4 percentage points, at level 2 by 6 percentage points, and at level 3 by 7 percentage points. These rates are all well above national averages for 2004/05, and are based on enrolments that show a 6% rise on 2004/05. Of particular note are the high pass rates for adults. They are now at 90%, 96% and 92% for levels 1, 2 and 3 respectively. Retention rates, however, remain slow to improve. At level 3 they are below the previous year's national averages for both age groups. The college is more robust in its monitoring of why some students leave after one year of a two year level 3 course. In some areas, such as beauty therapy, students are able to get good employment in their chosen vocational field without completing a level 3 qualification. The college is therefore considering offering some qualifications that can be gained within a single year, so that such students complete their courses. A new attendance monitoring project is identifying courses that have low retention, and tracking their attendance data through regular reports. All staff who read and act on such reports are receiving training in how to make better use of these data.

- Success rates for key skills have improved sharply for both age groups over the three years since 2003/04, and now stand at the high levels of 80% for students aged 16 to 18 and 78% for adult students.
- Success rates on work- based learning programmes in 2005/06 are high and improving. For example the success rate on the on-site assessment programme (OSAT) in construction is 89%. On level 2 engineering apprenticeships it is 80%, a rise of 13 percentage points. Across all areas of learning, three quarters of apprentices achieved their full framework in 2005/06 which is a very good rate of success.

What do value added and distance travelled measures show about the relative progress made by students?

- The college has now set up its own system to try to measure progress by students on graded qualifications from their starting points. Students coming from school are set a minimum target grade based upon their average points score at GCSE. This is calculated using the Hampshire-devised model of anticipated progress (a 'chances graph') that students should make.
- For the many students on non-graded qualifications this process is more difficult. The college is exploring ways of assessing the relative risk of students not completing these courses.

Quality of education and training

What does the college's teaching and learning observation programme report for 2005/06?

- In 2005/06 all full-time and fractional and a sample of sessional and part-time teaching staff were observed at least once. In all, 185 graded observations of lessons and tutorials were carried out. Some 5% were graded outstanding, 63% good, 25% satisfactory and 7% unsatisfactory. The findings are realistic, and the moderation and verification processes are robust. All teachers self-evaluate and grade their own observed lessons. Of those teachers who taught unsatisfactory lessons, some have since left the college and others are being directly supported by advanced practitioners to try to improve their practice. The college is now moving to a system of offering such direct developmental support to those teachers

whose lessons were graded as satisfactory, and is keen to broadcast the message to staff that satisfactory is not good enough for Eastleigh college. Two particular strands have emerged in the early stages of this system, both of which are formal ways of disseminating good teaching practice (an area for development identified at the last inspection). Monitored peer observations are offered to these staff so that they can learn from seeing other teachers' practical work. A programme of 'supported experiments', training sessions run by learning managers, has been launched to encourage teachers to reflect creatively on the different ways in which students learn.

- Teachers are now graded, during their observed lessons, on how effectively they deploy learning support assistants.
- A new senior manager has taken over responsibility for the quality of teaching and learning, and there are plans to move during this academic year to a combination of 'announced week' and 'unannounced drop-in' observations.

What actions has the college taken to improve the use of information and learning technology (ILT) in lessons? (an area for improvement at the last inspection)

- A new ILT element has been incorporated into the induction for new teaching staff, and for staff identified through appraisal as needing some personal development in this aspect of their work. In direct response to the last inspection report, a new post of e-learning facilitator has been created. From April 2007, staff will be able to take e-passport qualifications. The key criterion governing the college's expectations of staff with regard to their competence in, and use of, ILT will be its relevance and effectiveness for them as teachers.

Are there any new or impending curriculum developments and/or changes to accommodation/ facilities? What progress is being made by the new work-based learning learners in construction and engineering?

- The college has significantly increased its work-based learning provision, especially in engineering, construction and health care. This is in line with local and regional priorities. The college has widened its employer base through the new Train2Gain programme, through additional full-cost courses and also through working closely with a range of employer fora.

Work-based learning is well managed and good progress is being made by learners.

- At the last inspection, facilities for work-based learning in construction and engineering were identified as requiring improvement. Work on new accommodation has now started and the building programme is running to schedule. Disruption for existing learners, for example loss of some resource rooms, has been kept to a minimum through good project management. The College works in partnership with a range of training providers to ensure that industrial expertise, for example assessors with specialist building skills, is available when required.

How widespread and successful is the provision of adult and community learning (ACL)?

- Changes in the funding of adult and community learning have been managed effectively. Increased fees for learners have been introduced over a two year period. The total number of courses has been cut by about 40%. The number of students required to enable courses to run have been increased and some course durations have been modified to ensure cost effectiveness. The decline in participation in unfunded provision, last year nearly a fifth, is forecast this year to be over one third. Closures are mainly of daytime leisure courses. Feedback from tutors and venues suggest that many of these courses are continuing as self-financing clubs.
- The effect of this reduction on levels of new entrants into education and training has not yet been quantified; however, the College's initial analysis suggests it is not significant. The number of people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities on mainstream programmes remains constant. The college runs a suitably supported adult enrichment programme. The current programme of English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) is over subscribed, but since much of this provision will not be funded next year, the College anticipates a significant reduction in volume. The College is currently evaluating and remodelling its ACL provision in the light of experience this year.

Leadership and management

What progress has been made in the post-inspection action plan, and how effectively is that monitored?

- The post-inspection action plan is a clear, purposeful set of strategies that is already having a visible impact on areas for improvement identified at the last inspection in May 2006. Responsibilities and monitoring processes are evident.
- Eastleigh college has taken a good initiative to establish south-east region review pilots. This arises from the LSC's 'agenda for change' programme and in particular the need to improve further the quality and impact of self-assessment. Training is being developed on how to conduct and use peer self-assessment reviews, on how to share good practice in leadership and management, and on how to build capacity in the evaluation of self-assessment reports. Eastleigh College is linked, for this peer review programme, with North West Kent, Aylesbury, Milton Keynes and East Surrey colleges.

