

ANNUAL ASSESSMENT VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Name of College: Westminster Kingsway College
Date of visit: 6 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

Achievement and standards for 2006

- Unvalidated, provisional college data indicates that retention rates have fallen slightly. Success rates remain high but have also fallen slightly at some levels. Level 3 success rates have improved slightly. Progress in raising learner achievement at AS level has been variable. The college has taken appropriate action to improve progression rates from AS to A2, such as improving advice and guidance given to learners.

Attendance and punctuality

- Attendance has risen significantly since the last inspection from 74% to 81%. Attendance levels fell slightly last year by 1%. At the date of the visit, attendance levels were at 86% which is higher than at the time of the last annual assessment visit. Management information on attendance has improved, with electronic registers being effectively used to provide timely information about attendance issues. Management information on punctuality has also recently improved. Strategies to improve learner punctuality have had an impact on teacher and learner expectations. Teachers reported that the use of regular meetings to highlight learners with poor attendance and punctuality are valuable.

Achievement and standards for work-based learning

- Work-based learning numbers increased in 2005-2006 to 46 from 28 in 2004-2005. Learners are undertaking apprenticeships in hospitality, business administration and information technology (IT). Learner numbers for 2006-2007 have already increased on 2005-2006 although there are currently no IT learners. The college, in addition, has a new train to gain contract in 2006-2007 with a target of approximately 300 adult learners and a 14 to 16 youth apprenticeship scheme for 15 learners.
- Provider performance review data for 2005-2006 indicates a significant improvement in success rates for retail and customer enterprise, more specifically apprenticeships in hospitality. Success rates for 2004-2005

advanced apprenticeships have also improved. However, some provider performance review apprenticeship success rates for 2004-2005 did not match well with those predicted by local college data at the last annual assessment visit.

Quality of education and training

The quality of teaching and learning

- The college has produced a succinct analysis of teaching and learning across the college for 2005-06, and this has provided good evidence to inform the college self-assessment process at all levels. Subject sector areas have utilised this information to support training and development needs and to devise strategies to improve teaching and learning. The college has taken effective steps to reduce the amount of inadequate teaching, which is now low. However, the college recognises that too much teaching and learning remains satisfactory rather than good or better.
- The learning management system is being used purposefully by learners who find the uploaded content by teachers in different subject sector areas useful. Learners on vocational courses state that courses are now better organised compared to three years ago.

Key Skills

- Unvalidated data indicates that success rates for key skills have risen significantly since last year and are above the national success rate, however, this headline figure masks a decline in achievement in wider key skills. The college identifies that changes made last year to the delivery resulted in a decline in learners attaining accreditation and the college has taken action to improve accountability this year, for example, by developing the tutor role. It rightly remains a priority for development, with the teaching and learning report identifying insufficient focus on key and basic skills and a third of all subject sector areas have this as an area for development. The college continues to work towards embedding key skills, for example, by embedding assessment and teaching and learning of key skills on level 1 programmes through a partnership teaching approach.

Enrichment

- The college identified enrichment as a priority for 2005-2006. A team with this specific cross college responsibility have planned and implemented a satisfactory range of activities for learners. Curriculum area teachers have

responded well and the college provides a range of relevant work experience, master classes, and trips pertinent to improving learners understanding of the industry they wish to progress in. The student union and student representatives are fully involved in improving the learners' experience and have effected some positive changes.

Admissions

- The college have introduced a refined and updated college admissions policy. All relevant staff have been trained in operating the policy. The procedures are clear and provide learners with good guidance on establishing whether the course is appropriate for them prior to an interview with a tutor. The procedures have been fully implemented this year but it is too early to judge their impact. Learners note that they do receive guidance at different points in the course about progression and that the course is better than the information they read prior to joining.

Leadership and management

Changes to the curriculum management structure.

- Although new, the changes to the curriculum management structure has rationalised responsibility across curriculum team leaders and heads of department. Its aim to ensure closer curriculum management is having some early impact. One teacher reported that there was a greater professional dialogue as a consequence of the improved curriculum focus and valued the rationalisation of line management.

The estates strategy

- The estates strategy is clear but contingent on operational events occurring at specific times in the next few years. Satisfactory alternative temporary accommodation for staff and learners has been found as a result of site closures.