



Newham College of Further Education

Better
education
and care

Re-inspection report

Audience Post-sixteen	Published March 2007	Provider reference 130451
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Introduction

Newham College of Further Education was inspected in November 2004. Inspectors from the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) and the Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) carried out the inspection under Section 62 of the Learning and Skills Act. The quality of provision was found to be satisfactory or better in all areas inspected, except in work-based learning (WBL) in construction which was found to be less than satisfactory. Ofsted is responsible for re-inspecting all provision that is less than satisfactory within two years of the original inspection. If inadequate areas of learning or aspects of provision remain inadequate following re-inspection, inspectors will continue to monitor progress at annual assessment visits, but the areas will not be re-graded. They will be re-inspected during the full college inspection.

The less than satisfactory WBL in construction was re-inspected on the 12 and 13 December 2006. The outcomes of the re-inspection are as follows.

Curriculum/WBL area	Original grade	Re-inspection grade
WBL in construction	4	3

Context

The college offers a range of building engineering services and construction craft advanced apprenticeships in heating and ventilation, electrical installation, wood occupations, trowel occupations and plastering. At the time of re-inspection, there were 125 advanced apprentices in learning. Of these, 76 were on heating and ventilation programmes, 29 on electrical installation programmes and 20 on construction craft programmes. To meet employers' needs, 29 advanced apprentices attend programmes delivered by sub-contactors. All learners were employed prior to the commencement of their programme.

Strengths

- *very well-resourced training facilities*
- *particularly effective centralised electronic tracking and monitoring of learners progress*
- *good attendance*

Areas for improvement

- *insufficient self-assessment of construction work-based learning*
- *poor supervision of safety practice in the workplace*

Achievement and standards

Success rates for advanced apprentices have improved significantly since the last inspection and are now satisfactory. In 2003/04 the college inherited 29

advanced apprentices from other failed local training providers. Many of these learners had fallen behind with their programme and some had exceeded their planned completion date. Over the past three years, success rates have doubled from 25% in 2003/04 to 50% in 2005/06. Some learners have completed before their planned date and learners remaining on programme are making satisfactory progress. Attendance is good and at the time of inspection averaged 91%. Employers are promptly advised of any absence. The completion of key skills is satisfactory. Key skills are delivered early in the learner's programme and where appropriate learning and assessment materials are contextualised to the content of each craft technical certificate and national vocational qualification (NVQ).

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Theory lessons are effective in motivating learners and employ a wide range of teaching styles and support materials appropriate to learners' needs. Training facilities are good and well-resourced with a wide range of appropriate plant and equipment to support learners' practical training and meet industry standards. Assessment in the workplace is satisfactory. Effective assessment plans schedule visits to meet the assessment requirements of learners' NVQ. The advanced apprenticeship programmes offered by the college meet the needs of employers and learners. Tutors, assessors and reviewers work together to ensure that on and off-the-job training is effectively co-ordinated. Support for learners is satisfactory. Some learners are not clear on the progression opportunities available to them after completion of their advanced apprenticeship.

Leadership and management

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The centralised electronic system for the tracking and monitoring of learners' progress is good. Individual learning plans are updated electronically to record the action planning in each learner review. These initiatives have contributed to improved communications between reviewers, assessors and curriculum staff. Service level agreements set out clear responsibility for delivery of the frameworks both between faculties in the college and for sub-contractors. Most teachers are full-time and appropriately qualified. Staff development is effective in meeting their needs and those of recently appointed staff from industry who require teacher training. There is insufficient self assessment of construction work-based learning and the self-assessment report for 2005/06 does not identify specific strengths and areas for improvement. Supervision of safety practice in the workplace is poor. Monitoring of employers health and safety is insufficient to ensure that risk assessments are effective.

ANNUAL ASSESSMENT VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Name of College: Newham General Further Education College

Date of visit: 12- 13 December 2006

This feedback contains brief findings from the annual assessment visit (AAV). 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

Nationally verified success data for 2005/06 was not available at the time of this visit. Judgements have therefore been based on provisional LSC data and on college data supplied during the visit.

How well did students achieve in 2006?

- Student retention on short courses, which is the majority of the college's provision, was high at 95% and success rates on these courses, both for students aged 16 to 18 and those aged 19+, improved further on the high success rates of 2004/05. Success rates on long courses for 16 to 18 year old learners improved to 58%, which is broadly in line with the 2004/05 national average and reflected the good success rates at level 1. Success rates for adult learners on long courses have also risen to 63%, which is above the 2004/05 national average, again due to high achievement at level 1. Success rates for learners on level 2 courses, which fell in 2004/05, improved significantly in 2005/06 and are now approaching the national average for 04/05.
- There is some variation in performance across curriculum areas. The college attributes the low success rates in the languages curriculum area to the small proportion of learners on signing courses and on modern foreign language courses in community settings who seek accreditation. The very low success rates in health, public services and care for 16 to 18 year old learners is attributed to students' dual enrolment on the same qualification aim for some courses. Success rates are also low in media and the college has discontinued one course for new learners.

Has student attendance improved since the inspection?

- At the time of the last inspection, student attendance was low and punctuality was poor. Attendance data provided by the college now indicate that attendance has improved dramatically, but remains relatively low at 78% in 2005/06. College processes for monitoring attendance and punctuality are appropriate. A new model is in place, with closer monitoring and more time for student tracking through individual sessions with student learning advisors (SLAs), who have clear accountability for

the monitoring of attendance. Actions have been taken to raise student awareness of the importance of good attendance. It is too early to assess the impact of these strategies.

How well do work-based learners achieve?

- In 2005/06, 101 learners completed work-based training. Overall framework success rates for 2005/06 are low at 37% and well below the national average of 49%. Nevertheless, they show a significant improvement since 2004/05. The success rate for those completing frameworks or NVOs is also low at 39% compared to a national average of some 56%.

Has student achievement of key skills improved?

- Success rates in key skills remain extremely poor. In 2005/06 there were 406 entries at all ages for key skills awards. The success rate was very low at 7% and little improved on the 2004/05 success rate of 6%. For students aged 16 to 18 the success rate was marginally higher at 9%, which represented an improvement from 4.5% the year before, when the national key skills success rate was some 32%.

How well do students on courses in English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) achieve?

- Learner achievement in ESOL was particularly good in 2005/06. Of the 10,143 learners who started the programme, 94% were retained. The success rate was 93.5%, very close to that in 2004/05.

Quality of education and training

How effective are actions taken to improve the quality of teaching and learning?

- At the time of the last inspection, teaching and learning were judged to be satisfactory with 60% of lessons graded good or better. The profile from internal lesson observations during 2005/06 indicates that the proportion of good or better lessons has improved to 68% and the proportion of unsatisfactory lessons has increased slightly from 7% to 9%. Observation data are used effectively as part of the college's quality improvement processes, for example, the information provided supports staff development. The data are not currently used to analyse the characteristics of teaching and learning at different levels of courses. There are appropriate strategies to improve the quality of teaching and learning, for example, remuneration for agency staff is now linked to performance. Professional learning advisors, who are responsible for working with staff on developing and sharing best practice, have achieved external accreditation as subject coaches. This term, the college has introduced a new learner activity plan (LAP) and revised individual

learning plans. Whilst too early to fully assess the impact of these changes, the new lesson plan template has stimulated discussion around equality and tailoring learning activities to meet the needs of groups of learners. Linked to tracking arrangements, there is an increased coherence to how students are supported to progress academically in their studies. Improvements in monitoring the work of middle managers have resulted in explicit expectations regarding the monitoring and management of teaching and learning.

How has the college improved the quality of provision for those students learning English as an additional language?

- Good progress has been made in improving ESOL provision. The number of ESOL learners increased substantially in 2005/06. All provision at entry level 2 and above now has a clear vocational focus. ESOL learners receive three hours introduction to a range of vocational areas every six weeks. Progression rates have improved, to entry level 3, or into specific vocational training. Particularly useful work has been undertaken in developing information technology (IT)-based materials for all learners. The college has worked with an external organisation to develop IT-based ESOL learning materials which will be launched commercially in January 2007. All ESOL learners at the college now receive at least one and a half hours of IT-based training each week.

Leadership and management

What steps have been taken to address the outcomes for learners identified in Every Child Matters?

- The college has responded effectively to the Every Child Matters agenda. Faculties have mapped curriculum opportunities against the five outcomes and provision has been evaluated through teaching and learning observations undertaken this term. Cross-college activities, through Student Life and Student Advice department, also contribute to the college's strengthening evaluation of how it delivers these outcomes for students.

How are changes to the leadership of work-based learning supporting improvement?

- In the last year the college has continued to make satisfactory progress in improving work-based learning. The faculty of franchise and work-based learning has established appropriate arrangements to manage delivery within three existing host faculties. Arrangements for monitoring performance have been improved. Reports on work-based learning are now made frequently to a 'work-based learning task force' chaired by the deputy principal. The outcomes of monitoring are appropriately communicated to the governing body.

How are key skills managed within the college?

- The college has taken sound action to improve key skills delivery and success rates. The management of, and support for, key skills have been improved. In the last year 'on-line' assessment has been introduced. Learners are better motivated to take key skills' tests, and appreciate the fast feedback they receive. The capacity for initial key skills assessment has been improved significantly with results reported to tutors within 24 hours. There are two staff now dedicated to developing learners' key skills within the subject specialist areas. The success rate for learners aged 16 to 18 shows improvement since 2004/05. However, key skills success rates remain well below national averages and it is too early to judge the effectiveness of some of the actions taken.

How is the college addressing the weaknesses in its management information systems (MIS) identified in the 2005/06 self-assessment report (SAR)?

- Good progress is being made in resolving weaknesses identified in the use of management information. Within the last year the college has undertaken a thorough review of its management information and organisational structure, partly to address weaknesses identified in the SAR relating to the recording and reporting of learners' progress. A clear action plan has been agreed and significant resources are being made available to improve the management of business and learner information. New managers are being appointed and there is a clear emphasis being placed on MIS staff training. It is, however, too early to judge the full impact of the measures being taken.