



Bromley College

Better
education
and care

Re-inspection report

Audience
Post-sixteen

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130430

Introduction

Bromley College was inspected in December 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 English for speakers of other languages 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 unsatisfactory English for speakers of other languages was re-inspected on 21-22 November 2006. The outcomes of the re-inspection are as follows.

Curriculum Area	Original grade	Re-inspection grade
English for speakers of other languages	Unsatisfactory Grade 4	Good Grade 2

Context

The college offers a wide range of full-time and part-time ESOL courses from pre-entry to level 2 and specific ESOL vocational courses. Day time and evening courses are offered at the main campus and at the Hawthorn Centre in the community. There are 471 learners on the discrete provision 46 of these are aged 16-18 and 425 are aged 19 or over.

Strengths

- Good achievement and standards
- Good teaching and learning
- Highly responsive community provision
- Very good achievement on ESOL Administration level 2 and Hairdressing level 1 courses

Areas for improvement

- Lack of appropriate language support in vocational courses
- Inconsistent target setting and completion of ILPs

Achievement and standards

There is very good achievement on ESOL Administration level 2 and Hairdressing level 1 programmes with 100% achievement and retention in 2005-06. The college has introduced the new ESOL Skills for Life qualifications and success rates are high. Courses focus well on meeting the

work and life skills needs of learners. There is good progression across the levels. Learners achieve very well on the eight ESOL "EXTRA" vocational courses in place at levels 1 and 2. These courses provide good opportunities for entry to further training and employment. The standard of learners' work is good. Learners develop good speaking skills and gain effective self-study skills.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning are good. Teachers use a wide range of learning activities which stimulate all learners. Teachers make good use of individual and group work including peer support to develop learners' communication skills. ILT is insufficiently used in the classroom, but is used effectively in the language laboratory.

The assessment of learners' work is thorough. Moderation is effective and there is a standardised marking scheme used by staff and peers. Individual learning plans (ILPs) are inconsistently written, with challenging and specific targets in the better plans and vague unfocused targets in others.

The resources are satisfactory. Many rooms are well equipped with data projectors both on the main site and in the community. Community provision responds well to identified needs, for example, a request for an ESOL and childcare course by a Somali women's group is being currently provided. Appropriate in-class language support is not available for learners with language needs on vocational courses, although they are encouraged to attend ESOL classes and some attend workshops. The numbers benefiting from language support are low.

The tutorial process is satisfactory and learners are given additional guidance on career pathways and supported effectively for their pastoral and welfare needs.

Leadership and management

Leadership and management are satisfactory. All staff contribute well through course reviews to the curriculum self-assessment process. Effective sharing of good practice and an extensive staff development programme have contributed to improved teaching and learning. There has been insufficiently rigorous monitoring of the quality of the learners' ILPs.

ANNUAL ASSESSMENT VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Name of College: Bromley College of Further Education
Date of visit: 21-22 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 well do learners achieve?

- Overall in 2005/6 the college improved its success rates, retention and achievement to national averages, but with variation between the levels. At level 1, overall success rates improved to just under national average and at level 2 improved to national average. For 16-18 year olds success rates at levels 2 and 3 are below national averages but at level 1 are at national average. For adults success rates at level 1 are below national average and at levels 2 and 3 are at national average. Key skills success rates have significantly improved to 81% overall and for work based learning programmes. Success rates for short courses have improved from 88% in 2003/04 to 92% in 2005/06, well above national average, but results for 16-18 indicates lower than national average success rates. The college is planning to cease the courses in EQUALS taught in the learning centre, where retention and achievement are particularly low and to replace these with alternative qualifications.

The college's work-based learning programme continues to increase its learner number targets from 136 in 2005/06 to 154 in 2006/07. The work-based learning programme now includes a small Train-to-Gain programme for adults. Framework success rates are good and improving on hairdressing and motor vehicle programmes. The achievement of full frameworks has declined in business administration and accounting from 41% in 2004/05 to 33% in 2005/06.

Quality of education and training

Has the college implemented sufficiently robust systems of observation? According to college analysis the proportion of good and better teaching is less at L1 and L3; how effective are college strategies to raise standards in these areas?

- Following feedback from the last AAV visit, the college put in place a series of actions and processes including the recent implementation of software to ensure greater standardisation of observation processes. This

has provided the college with a good tool for gathering information on the strengths and weaknesses of the teaching staff and a means by which, the college can identify less effective teaching. The college has not yet targeted individual teachers who need to improve aspects of their teaching that may result in unsatisfactory learning and progress for students. Attendance by teachers at subsequent staff development workshop sessions is mostly optional. Monitoring by line managers and the quality development unit observers, of actions agreed following observation, is not consistently in place for all teachers. Observations records indicate an insufficient focus on students' learning and skills development during lessons and some key strengths that are identified, are norms. Areas of improvement arising from observations do not consistently feature in teachers' personal development and action plans. Lecturers who have been graded as outstanding during observations, have been identified for the sharing of good practice amongst staff, but it is too early to assess the impact of this initiative. In some curriculum areas, there are examples of sharing of good teaching practice by course teams. Feedback to staff arising from the observation of tutorials, does not identify precise actions for improvement.

Given the issues of low retention has the college addressed the support of students with literacy, language and numeracy needs?

Following on from the last AAV feedback, the college identified some key actions.

- The previously separate management arrangements for all aspects of additional learning support have been integrated for 2006/07 and this is contributing to better sharing of information between some vocational and support tutors on their students' learning and progress.
- The role of basic skills support tutors has expanded to include language support in class, as part of the Quality Improvement Action Plan in 2006/07. However at the time of the AAV visit no students were receiving language support in vocational classes. Some students who need additional language support attend ESOL workshops where they receive a satisfactory level of individual or group support. In addition, some students attend ESOL classes, where they receive general language skills development unrelated to the vocational area they are studying. The college has not sufficiently evaluated the impact of this support for those students with vocational language needs.
- The college does not currently have a complete overview of the numbers of students receiving language support or the impact of the support on achievement and retention. The setting of targets in relation to additional learning support are not prioritised sufficiently. Numbers identified as needing support are low and are declining, however numbers of students of those identified who take up the support have increased over the last three years. Whilst the numbers of students receiving literacy and numeracy support has improved slightly between 2004 and 2006 from 33% to 38%, this is low.

- Key skills are now delivered in the curriculum areas. This has been very successful in improving pass rates in key skills across the college and to developing students' economic well being. In 2005/06 students on level 1 programmes leading to a CACHE qualification in childcare, who completed their key skills in communication skills and wider key skills such as Working with Others, had greater rates of progression to level 2, than those who had not been successful in key skills. In a hairdressing and beauty NVQ level 2 course students are helped to make a successful transition from level 1. They have benefited from in class weekly literacy and study skills support, focusing on assignment writing.

Overall attendance across the college improved in 2005/06 by 4% to 81%. How effective are the actions in place?

- Teaching staff and full-time students are very aware of the revised attendance requirements at the start of the year, and a set of sanctions for poor attendance has been displayed in classrooms. Weekly management information reports following up poor attendance and/or punctuality help managers and teachers to identify students with erratic or poor attendance.

How rigorous is initial assessment; the production of ILPs and impact of these in relation to SOWs and use by all tutors to inform student progress?

- The college has improved the admissions and induction processes through improved course information for students and taster sessions in some curriculum areas. Initial and diagnostic assessments are providing a more effective selection process to ensure that students are enrolled on an appropriate level of course and to identify students who need additional learning support. This is reflected in the reduction of student transfers from 69 in 2005/6 to 38 in 2006/07. Students and tutors agree a minimum target grade based on outcomes from assessment and monitor progress towards achieving the targets in Individual learning plans. However, the precision of target setting and action planning is variable, and targets are not always sufficiently detailed or specific. Learning plans do not include specific literacy, numeracy and language learning goals where needs have been identified. Many action plans do not identify appropriate strategies to address students' attendance, behaviour and progress.

Leadership and management

How consistent is the implementation of the quality assurance systems across the college and in particular, with regard to tutorials?

- Course evaluation and review are generally satisfactory. However, some courses make insufficient use of data to support judgements and do not identify specific actions to address particular weaknesses. The college self-assessment report is informed by detailed school self-assessments, which identify areas for improvement. These are now more self critical and use a range of evidence as the basis for judgements.
The college is developing a more consistent approach to tutorials, through a core tutorial curriculum that covers the key themes relating to Every Child Matters, such as healthy lifestyles and personal safety. The progression audit is a strength of the tutorial system. Students greatly value the programme of study skills and motivational speakers timetabled during the week. The time identified enables personal, subject and support tutors to share information about students, identifying those at risk of leaving and those requiring additional support needs. However, many students' action plans do not consistently reflect issues identified in the students' subject reviews, or contain clearly focused targets with agreed dates for completion.

What is the impact of the modifications that the college has made to its Skills for Life Strategy?

- The college has produced a very sound and detailed Skills for Life policy and Strategy. However there is no detailed implementation action plan with milestones, targeted and measurable outcomes that would focus all staff in timely delivery of the Skills for Life Strategy.
Skills for Life (SfL) curriculum coaches have been appointed since the start of this year to work with teaching staff and contribute to improvements in the literacy, numeracy and language skills of students in the classroom. There are some good examples of how the SfL coaches work productively with vocational tutors, for instance, through adapting teaching and learning materials and making them more comprehensible for students and through preparation of glossaries. The coaches are still developing their roles and responsibilities with individual curriculum areas. Records of their work indicate inconsistency in how they are viewed across the college and in the rigour and quality of their action planning.

The college has responded to the feedback from last visit on greater consultation with staff and students through a range of actions. How effective are these?

- Team meetings are scheduled on a regular basis and staff have been consulted on strategies to improve student attendance, the Tutorial Framework and the Teaching and Learning Handbook. Students have been consulted and a video of the 'Learner Voice' was produced in the

summer to inform the college's teaching and learning conference. A section on student views has been added to the standard agenda for course team meetings, but there is little use of it as yet by course teams.

Has the college identified suitable strategies for minority ethnic adults to raise their achievement?

- Since last AAV visit, the college has increased its intervention strategies in support of minority ethnic students including mentoring, study skills and motivational events and an additional Connexions Adviser. These appear to have had an overall positive impact on 16-18 year old minority ethnic students. In 2005/06, college data indicates that the performance of these students at level 3 was generally better than the performance of white students. In 2005/06 the performance of adult minority ethnic students at level 3 was generally below the performance of white students. For the largest groups of minority ethnic students receiving literacy, numeracy and language support, success rates for 16-18 Black African and Other Asian and for adult Black Caribbean students were low. The college has not sufficiently monitored the effectiveness of its support strategies on these minority ethnic groups.

Any other observations from the visit not identified in the pre-visit analysis:

ECM: How does the college contribute to the healthy life styles of 16-18 students?

- Although the college has improved significantly the provision of healthy eating for students in the two canteens over the last year, the availability of healthy foods is fairly limited and more expensive than other foods. The choice of non team sports has increased in the last year with the college responding to requests from students for the provision of a broader range of sports and girls only activities, such as girls' football. A "Romance Academy" initiative is planned this year to encourage greater self esteem and confidence in young women and to reduce under age pregnancy.