

ANNUAL ASSESSMENT VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Name of College: Loppington House
Date of visit: 28 September 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 robust is the evidence to support college judgements on learner progress and achievement?

- The college has implemented a system to track progress in relation to targets. This involves using a single tracker sheet that shows clearly the progress made by learners in achieving their targets. However, the majority of learners have only been in college for a few weeks, their initial assessment is not yet complete and it is not possible to evaluate the robustness of the targets.

Quality of education and training

What curriculum development has taken place, especially for the more able learners, and is a suitable work placement programme in place?

- The college is still developing its curriculum. Work has been undertaken to develop individual targets for learners, and the college is planning to provide more flexibility within the curriculum. It has undertaken a review of the curriculum which has resulted in proposed changes to focus better on individual learning outcomes rather than activities for the whole group. The planning of the revised curriculum is in the early stages of development, and the introduction of a curriculum to challenge more able learners has been slow. The college is in the process of identifying possible external and internal work-placements, such as mini-enterprises, and has a target to provide one day a week of supported placement for those learners able to benefit.

How effective is the student assessment and review process?

- The pre-placement assessment does not include specialist assessments undertaken by the college and relies heavily on information from previous placements. It is not clear how this is linked to the initial assessment once learners start on the programme. The college is piloting a diagnostic assessment, which assesses learners in relation to an external award. Literacy, numeracy and communications are included in the assessments. All learners have a speech and language assessment in the first half term. It is too early to evaluate the effectiveness of the diagnostic assessment as a means of assessing individual learner need, or its use in programme planning and review for individual learners.

Leadership and management

What has been the impact of the recent organisational restructure?

- The college has restructured the organisation of its senior staff, who have clear roles and responsibilities. Regular meetings are held that have improved communications between the care and educational aspects of the college.

What progress has the college made on developing its self-assessment and quality improvement systems?

- The college has made a start on implementing quality assurance mechanisms. The learner files are now audited to make sure that key activities, as part of the learner programme, have taken place. Teaching observations are in place. Although they are detailed, the judgements are insufficiently clear, and there is too little focus on what learners have learnt. The self-assessment report continues to be too descriptive, and little progress has been made since the previous annual assessment visit. The college is currently reviewing its self-assessment, with a view to producing a more evaluative report.

Is the college up to date with legal requirements for equal opportunities and for safeguarding?

- Staff have undergone CRB checks and training in the identification of abuse. Risk assessments are rigorous and developed for individuals in a range of contexts. The college has been slow to promote equality of

opportunity. It does not have adequate implementation plans for its main policy, and does not have a race equality action plan. The college has not had a disability audit.

How have resources been improved, including staff qualifications and training?

- Two senior staff now have certificates of education, and all teaching staff have either achieved or are on courses at stages one or two. Levels of specialist qualification for teachers are low. The college continues to provide external expertise in speech and language therapy, and further training in Makaton is planned. There has been some improvement to the teaching accommodation.