



Bridge College

Better
education
and care

Re-inspection report

Audience
Post-sixteen

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Provider reference
134143

Introduction

Bridge College was inspected in February 2005. 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 the Self/Creative curriculum area 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 Self/Creative aspect was re-inspected on 30-31 January 2007. The outcomes of the re-inspection are as follows.

Curriculum aspect	Original grade	Re-inspection grade
Self/Creative	4 Unsatisfactory	3 Satisfactory

Context

The curriculum area is accessed by all students in the college and includes citizenship, creative arts and expressive arts. Learning activities include men's and women's groups, art and creative craft, drama, dance, music technology and the opportunity to gain English Speaking Board accreditation. A range of enrichment activities are available.

Strengths

- Good development of communication and presentation skills
- Effective promotion of independence and adult status
- Good support to meet the diverse needs of individual learners

Areas for improvement

- Insufficient recording of learners' overall progress
- Insufficient co-ordination of core targets

Achievement and standards

Achievements are satisfactory overall and good in some aspects, such as communication and presentation skills. Students learn to be confident communicators in a range of settings including performance and public speaking. Students develop skills to use a range of aids and switches to improve their communication. They have made presentations at national and

local conferences and contributed to local displays of art. Where appropriate, learners gain accreditation for their achievements. Learners improve their behaviour through the use of effective support strategies. Learners clearly enjoy being at college and are proud of what they achieve. Reviews of progress, however, do not fully capture the full extent of progress learners are making.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed during the re-inspection and some is very good. Effective use is made of a range of resources including information and communication technology (ICT) to support learning. Some teaching accommodation remains cramped. Planning for learning has improved and is now satisfactory. Baseline assessment is thorough but core targets are not well co-ordinated across learner programmes. Staff are skilled at supporting the diverse learning needs of individuals. They actively promote independence and adult status. Good use is made of support staff, a significant improvement since the last inspection. The college has reviewed the curriculum and student groupings to provide a better match to learners' needs and this is now satisfactory. Specialist support and personal guidance are good.

Leadership and management

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The re-organisation of learner groups has contributed well to both the quality of teaching and the effective deployment of support staff. It is too early to judge the impact of other changes to the curriculum but early indications are positive. Systems of communication are effective. The promotion of equality and diversity has improved. Quality assurance is satisfactory and supported by effective training. Inspection findings match the college's own self-assessment.

ANNUAL ASSESSMENT VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Name of College: Bridge College
Date of visit: 30-31 January 2007

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 trends in learner achievement since the last inspection?

- Achievement in communication skills and the development of learners' personal and social skills continue to be good. Students successfully develop their independence skills during their time at college and they gain confidence in self advocacy. In 2005/06 learners achieved full or unit accreditation for 37 external awards, including City and Guilds (C&G) Communication Skills, ECDL and Clait and C&G Preliminary Cookery.

Do learners acquire sufficient skills to help them make a successful transition at the end of their programmes?

- Learners gain a wide range of important skills to support transition at the end of their programme. These include skills gained in college and external work placements. Learners are assessed on their ability to complete practical competencies and demonstrate skills such as team work. Destination data for 2005/06 shows a decrease in transition to further education colleges for 19+ learners; the college indicates this is linked to changes in funding for adult students. All students have a transition package which includes more than one possible destination. Over the last year the college has strengthened its wide range of networks to support transition. These include closer relationships with further education colleges, employers, the local community, parents/carers and with a wide range of agencies. Other improvements since the last inspection include the appointment of a senior manager for admissions and transitions, a senior support worker and new transition subject targets. A questionnaire designed to assess the quality of transition provides useful information to support continuous improvement. The college has accurately identified the need to track long term success and the sustainability of transition.

Quality of education and training

What developments have taken place since the last annual assessment visit (AAV) to meet the needs of learners with autistic spectrum conditions (ASC)?

- Developments to support students with ASC are satisfactory. This has been part of the overall review and development of the curriculum which has taken place since the last AAV. Students with ASC are one of four groups of targeted students within the new organisation of the curriculum. Currently there are 12 students with ASC and the college faces increasing demand for places on the programme. Students and staff have benefited from the provision of a new discrete, low arousal environment which provides a supportive, safe and ordered setting for activities, management of behaviours and specific needs. A wide range of staff development supports both teaching and support staff and includes both awareness raising and specific ASC training, including post-graduate level courses for two members of staff.

Does specialist support continue to be good overall? Have issues in the last inspection regarding support for visually impaired learners and learners with ESOL (English for speakers of other languages) needs been addressed?

- Specialist therapy and support continues to be a strength of the college. Issues since the last inspection have been addressed satisfactorily. For learners with a visual impairment, the college collects appropriate information during initial assessment, which informs the learning plan for the student. Information is shared with class teachers, who are given helpful prompts on how the student can best access the learning. Teachers can also draw on support from staff in the college with more expertise in visual impairment. For learners with ESOL needs, the assessment process now begins on link days prior to a student starting a programme. Assessments are undertaken in students' home languages if appropriate and interpreters are used to initiate conversations to support assessment. In addition interpreters provide contact with families. The college has a good understanding of the significant difficulties of accurate assessment given the lack of research with young bi-lingual adults who also experience other multiple barriers to participation in learning. The

college makes appropriate assessment decisions in this context, leading to satisfactory support on programme.

To what extent do individual learning programmes (ILPs) provide a robust system for monitoring learner progress?

- The ILP system is well developed and provides an effective framework for monitoring learners through their programmes. However, there are still inconsistencies within the system in relation to the quality of target setting and recording. The college undertook a review of ILPs in May 2006. A number of key improvement areas were identified which match AAV and re-inspection findings. The college has identified the embedding of the recognising and recording progress and achievement process (RARPA) within individual learning plans as one of the key indicators for improvement. The college is starting to use an electronic data system to help track students' progress but it is too early to evaluate its impact.

Leadership and management

What improvements have taken place in quality assurance arrangements?

- The system for observing teaching and learning has improved and is now satisfactory. Managers have had training to help them judge the quality of lessons. Outcomes from the observations are fed into the performance management system and are well used to inform the staff development programme. For example, the observation system led the college to realise that the role of support workers was not identified sufficiently in lesson plans and this is now being addressed. The college is also starting to share good practice in teaching and learning more systematically. The staff development programme is good. The time allocated to training has been increased significantly and training is well matched to the needs of individual staff and the college priorities.
- The college is developing its self-assessment processes. The self-assessment report accurately identifies areas for development. However, the evidence base to underpin self-assessment is not complete, for example strengths in the progress made by learners are not always well documented. The views of learners are gathered and there are plans to develop the student council to give it a more influential role within the college.

What action has taken place to focus governor involvement on learner outcomes?

- There has been some progress in this area. Board membership includes appropriate educational expertise and governors are involved in discussions on the self-assessment report for the college. However, they have not yet undertaken a self-assessment of their own functions. An induction programme is in place for new governors, there are training inputs at some governor meetings and governors are made aware of external events they can attend. However, there is no formal training plan for governors.