

## ANNUAL ASSESSMENT VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Name of College: Woking College  
Date of visit: 4 July 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 current recruitment trends? Has the upward trend continued?

- The upward trend in recruitment has been maintained. In 2006/07 the college had over 700 students aged 16 to 18, 450 were in the first year of their course. Applications for 2007/08 have been strong and the college will be funded for 800 students aged 16 to 18. College managers are confident that the trend of increased student numbers will continue. The college has met all its adult enrolment targets over the past few years.

What are the current success, retention and achievement rates? Have AS and A2 pass rates improved? Have improvements in psychology been sustained? What are the outcomes for adult learners are level 2 and level 3?

- Success rates at all levels have improved over 3 years. The exception to this is the success rate for AS courses for students aged 16 to 18 2005/06 which declined by 2% to 78%. Retention was generally good on all level 1 and level 2 programmes. At level 3, retention was above national average for 16 to 18 year olds but declined to below average for the very small number of adult learners. Pass rates at all levels improved in 2005/06 and were at or above national average for students aged 16 to 18. The pass rates for adult learners on level 2 and level 3 programmes improved but remained below national averages.

What is the current in-year attendance rate?

- Current attendance rates are good and unexplained absences are low.

Have value added scores maintained after last year's significant increase?

- Overall value added scores were good in 2005/06. Scores for A2 placed the college in the top 10% and for AS in the top 25% of participating institutions.

What were the outcomes for last year's key skills and what are the current indications?

- The college does not routinely enter students for key skills tests and has adopted a skills strategy delivered through the curriculum. However, all first year students take an innovative level 2 course in financial literacy and the results this year have been encouraging. Over 300 students were entered for the module tests and to date there is an 87% pass rate for all 3 modules.

## Quality of education and training

What are the outcomes of the 2006/07 lesson observations? What does the profile indicate and how are managers addressing any issues?

- Lesson observations are carried out by a team of around 12 observers most of whom are curriculum leaders. Training in the Common Inspection Framework and moderation of grades has taken place. Lessons to be observed are identified in advance and the current profile shows 81% of lessons were graded as good or better. Action plans and re-observations are put in place following any grade 3 or grade 4 observation and peer observations are developing. Key issues identified from the current round of observations are being taken forward to whole staff in-service training early in the next academic year.

Is information learning technology (ILT) more embedded in lessons?

- Lesson observation data indicate that ILT is becoming more embedded in teaching and learning. Most classrooms now have interactive whiteboards and the college has purchased more PCs for students to

use. Considerable training has taken place, and more is planned, to introduce staff to Moodle and an advanced practitioner has responsibility to help staff develop their ILT skills. In the next academic year students' individual learning plans (ILPs) will contain ILT targets.

What progress has been made in ensuring work experience for vocational IT and business studies students?

- Plans are in place to enable all vocational students to access relevant work experience in February 2008. Health and social care students already have a well established work placement programme. A one day industrial conference was held in 2006 for all vocational students. This event, facilitated partly by Connexions and Surrey Business Link, focused on interview technique, enterprise and CV building. Student evaluations of the day were very positive.

How has learning support developed this year?

- The learning support team feel well supported by senior management. Additional learning support is now mentioned in the college prospectus and the team have a role in the induction of new staff to the college. Accommodation has been improved to make it more flexible to use and to increase privacy for interviews. More students are identified for support and have been supported throughout this academic year. A recent analysis of college results has shown that students who regularly attend their support sessions achieve on average, 2 grades above levels predicted from their previous attainment.

## Leadership and management

What developments are there regarding accommodation?

- The Surrey LLSC has recently asked the college to develop an accommodation strategy that includes a new build. The college has identified a site in the centre of Woking which could be suitable for a new college and which may well have the agreement of the local Borough Council. A project costing about £35 million is under consideration and the college should know if this is likely to move to the next stage of application within the next 6 months.

How are Key Skills being managed across the college and best practice shared?

- The college introduced an interesting level 2 course in financial literacy to all first years in 2006/07. This has been a success. Students are not entered for key skills tests but have embedded key skills through their main programmes. Progress in gaining key skills will be further developed through ILPs and tutorial work. Around 40% of the first year cohort in the college does not have a level 2 IT qualification on entry to the college. Currently the college does not provide a formal mechanism for them to gain a level 2 IT qualification.

What is the current financial position of the college?

- The college is in financial category A and has been so for the past few years.

Any themes from the pre-visit analysis not explored during the visit:

- There was not enough time to explore the way in which the college collaborates with other providers.