

ANNUAL ASSESSMENT VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Name of College: Havering College
Date of visit: 29 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

The headline success rate for all qualifications and ages of learners in 2005/06 was above the national average for similar colleges and represents a continuing trend of improvement. How consistent is the improvement across age groups and types of courses?

- The overall success rate for all qualifications and age groups in 2005/06 was 77% which is just above the national average for similar colleges and represents a continuing trend of improvement. Success rates for long courses improved slightly in 2005/06 in comparison with the previous year. The overall rate for short courses also improved and is at the national average.
- Overall, success rates for 16-18 year olds following long programmes were good in 2005/06 and showed significant improvement from the previous year. Success rates for adults are also good but have not improved significantly from 2004/05 other than at level 1. For 16 to 18 year olds, the college exceeded its targets for success, retention and achievement. Success and achievement targets for adults were exceeded, but the college missed its target for retention by 1%.
- Success rates for long programmes and all age groups at levels 1, 2 and 3 have shown a continuing trend of improvement and were significantly above the national at all levels in 2005/06. For 16 to 18 year olds, success rates for long programmes at levels 2 and 3 showed further improvement in 2005/06 but fell slightly at level 1. Despite the decline at level 1, success rates for this age group continue to be above the national averages for colleges of a similar type at levels 1, 2 and 3. Success rates for GCE AS/A2 provision improved over the same period and are in the top quartile. Overall success rates for adults following long programmes continue to be above average. An improving trend has been maintained at level 1 with success rates in the top quartile but the rate declined at level 2 from the 90th percentile to 2 percentage points above average.

Rates remained constant at level 3 and adults succeed particularly well on GCE AS/A2 programmes.

- Where as the retention rates for adults improved at level 3 in 2005/06 and are above average, rates declined at levels 1 and 2 and are at and below the national average respectively. Retention rates for young people improved at level 3 in 2005/06 and were at the national average. Rates remained constant at level 2 but declined at level 1 although they continue to be above the national average.
- Overall pass rates for long programmes are above the national average. The most significant improvement was at level 1 where rates were well above the national average. Pass rates improved at levels 1, 2 and 3 for 16 to 18 year olds and are above the national average at level 3 and well above at levels 1 and 2. Pass rates improved very considerably for adults following level 1 long programmes and are well above the national average. At level 2, rates improved slightly but declined at level 3 and are only just above the national averages for similar colleges.
- The average point score per examination entry for student following general and vocational A/AS or equivalent programmes in 2005/06 was 200.7 which is just below the England average but above the local LSC average. The average point score per student following general and vocational A/AS or equivalent programmes was below average due to students at the college taking fewer qualifications.
- The college has a contextual value added score of 1015.0 which indicates students at the college, on average, made better progress than similar students nationally. On the basis of the pilot sample of schools and colleges, the college is in the top 20% for adding value. These data support the overall picture provided by other methods of comparison with national data.

What action is being taken to improve overall and timely work based learning success rates and what impact is it having?

- Work-based learning success rates are now monitored more closely and are reviewed by the senior management team fortnightly. The college is on target to improve the overall success rates and the current data indicate that the overall success rates for apprentices will be over 70% in 2006/07. The college target for 2006/07 is a 5% increase in advanced apprenticeship overall success rates and again data indicate that this will figure be exceeded. Overall timely success rates are poor but changes to the management of work-based learning is beginning to have an impact.

Is the college taking any specific action to improve the success rates of minority ethnic groups and what impact is it having?

- Success rates for students aged 16 to 18 from different minority ethnic groups are in line or better than similar groups nationally. For 16 to 18 year olds success rates are at or above benchmark for 15 of the 17 different categories of minority ethnic students attending the college. The exceptions are Asian or Asian-British - other and White Irish. For adults, 15 of the 17 categories have success rates at or above benchmark. The exceptions are Asian or Asian British- Bangladeshi and mixed-White and Black Caribbean. The college provides students with good personal and specialist support and teachers adapt their teaching styles well in response to the language and other needs of their students.

How are 14-16 year olds achieving?

- Young people aged 14 to 16 who attend college generally achieve well particularly where the working relationship between their school and the college is strong. Students who have received good advice and guidance prior to enrolment and who are committed to programmes offered by the college also succeed well.

Are attendance rates improving?

- Attendance rates have continued to improve since the last inspection and for 2005/06 the rate was 88%. The rate for the autumn of 2006/07 was 92%. The newly introduced electronic registration system is being used to good effect to monitor attendance and the college is meticulous in following up absences. Punctuality has also improved but some young people are still experiencing difficulty turning up to lessons on time particularly those who travel long distances to the college.

Why were E2E outcomes so low?

- The college's E2E contract has been terminated because of poor outcomes caused by over-recruitment and insufficient college capacity to provide the level of one-to-one attention these learners require. Foundation programmes available at the college are providing appropriate learning opportunities for this cohort of learners. These programmes also offer good opportunities for progression either to further learning or supported employment.

Quality of education and training

What action is the college taking to improve the quality of teaching and learning and eliminate the level of unsatisfactory teaching which has not changed significantly since the last inspection.

- The college continues to place significant emphasis on improving teaching and learning although college data indicate there was no significant overall improvement in the quality of teaching and learning during 2005/06. Lessons are observed by line managers and through unannounced internal inspection. Moderation procedures are effective in ensuring consistency of judgement across both approaches. Similar proportions of good or better teaching were identified through both approaches but more unsatisfactory teaching (9%) was observed through internal inspection. At the time of the visit the college was carrying out a thorough analysis of the data to determine whether this was due to differences in sampling methods adopted by the two approaches. Staff are observed annually and observation grades inform their appraisal. The college has a strong culture of performance management which is promoted, in part, through teaching observation. Staff who are judged to be unsatisfactory are supported by advanced practitioners. A wide range of training and development opportunities are provided and subject learning coaches work with staff to develop different learning strategies.

How are lesson observation judgements moderated?

- Lesson observations are moderated through paired observations and review of observation evidence. Self-assessments are also scrutinised by an external consultant and the college works with Newham College and Greenwich Community College who provide peer assessment of self-assessment reports.

What impact is the Skills for Life strategy having and how are key skills achievements improving overall and are they becoming more consistent across the college?

- The self-assessment report acknowledges that the improvements anticipated from the Skills for Life strategy have been slower than expected and steps have been taken to strengthen the implementation of the strategy. Teaching staff have now taken full ownership of integrating and contextualising literacy and numeracy into subject areas. A team of support tutors provide one-to-one or group support during lessons. ESOL

provision is under the college's own special measures for improvement. The additional support provided is having a significant impact on retention.

- The appointment of a key skills coordinator has had a significant impact on contextualizing key skills particularly in work-based learning. Key skills are now introduced at the beginning of the apprenticeship and this action is effectively contributing to the improvement in the overall success rates.

How are employer links being used to improve learning?

- The college has strong links with employers which are being used effectively to improve learning opportunities. The college's Business Development Unit has secured significant Train to Gain contracts and also works on a number of different commercial projects worth in excess of £1 million. Employers are providing facilities to enable literacy and numeracy programmes to take place in the workplace. The college has developed a comprehensive database of employer information to support learning. Wide ranging links with community organisations are helping the college bringing learning to a wider range of people.

How are individual learning plans used and what impact are they having? Is the impact consistent across the curriculum?

- Students are supported well by their tutors and a system of case conferences was introduced in 2006 to help monitor students' progress. Individual learning plans which are held electronically have been developed as part of the colleges integrated and comprehensive management information systems. These plans are easily accessible to both students and staff and include up to date attendance information as well as information about students' progress against targets for different aspects of their work. Staff find the learning plans useful although the college recognises there is still work to be done to make target setting more rigorous and consistent across the college.

Do adult learners have sufficient support?

- Adults following full-time courses receive the same support as 16 to 18 year olds. The college has also appointed a part-time student tutor who is available in person, by phone or e-mail four evenings a week to respond to queries from part-time learners. The take up of support during

2005/06 has been low and the college is evaluating the effectiveness of the post.

How is provision for 14 to 16 year olds developing, and is progress being made towards introducing the new diplomas?

- The college has been successful in developing provision for 14 to 19 year olds and in developing good working relationships with different institutions. The college is working with schools on the introduction of the new diplomas. Clear areas for development have been identified such as need to strengthening information sharing and initial advice and guidance for students. The college has started to work with the local authority and schools to develop cross consortium quality assurance procedures.

Leadership and management

What action is the college taking to improve retention rates?

- The college has prioritized the introduction of electronic registers in order to improve both attendance and retention rates. The process has been well managed and the new approach is regarded highly by staff. The development of integrated information systems is also having an impact on retention through enabling immediate access to information about students' progress and enabling early intervention where needed.

How are partnership arrangements being used to improve participation in education and training in the area and outcomes for young people?

- The college has established good and extensive working links with a wide variety of partners ranging from local schools to community groups and employers ranging from small local businesses to multinationals. There are particularly strong and productive links with employers in the engineering industry. This department for example, responds well to employers' needs by offering flexible and bespoke provision. These links help to develop and maintain the resource base and inform further development of the curriculum.
- The college also makes good use of its links and partnerships to secure funding to support innovation and curriculum development

What action is being taken to improve the consistency of the impact of QA systems across the college?

- Quality assurance is now an integral part of the work of the college. All course teams and service areas prepare Quality Self Assessments. Validation of self-assessment is supported by a Scrutiny Panel and an external consultant. The college also works with Newham College and Greenwich Community College to peer assess and validate self-assessment reports.

What impact is the process of internal inspection having on outcomes?

- Internal inspection has increased the rigour of both lesson observation and quality assurance and is now part of the college routine. Feedback is detailed and the process is conducted openly and in a supportive manner. Staff welcome the feedback they receive from independent observers and the opportunities provided to share good practice.

What impact has the restructuring of WBL had on outcomes?

- The integration of work-based learning into the curriculum areas has resulted in improved ownership of the work by curriculum staff. Dedicated operational managers have been appointed to liaise between employers, learners and the college. This is beginning to have an impact on timely success rates. Work-based learning teams meet monthly to discuss the progress of individual student to ensure success targets are being met.