

RE-INSPECTION MONITORING OF SOLIHULL COLLEGE

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Outcome of Re-Inspection Monitoring

- The overall provision in the curriculum area of science and mathematics is now **satisfactory**.
- The overall provision in the curriculum area of business administration, management and professional is now **satisfactory**.
- The overall provision in the curriculum area of hospitality, leisure, sport and travel is now **satisfactory**.

Background

Solihull College was inspected in November 2001. 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 in all areas inspected, except in science and mathematics, business administration, management and professional and hospitality, leisure, sport and travel, which were found to be unsatisfactory.

Ofsted and the ALI have particular duties in relation to colleges where their inspection report indicates that individual curriculum and/or work-based learning (WBL) areas are unsatisfactory or very weak or that leadership and management are unsatisfactory or very weak. Where a college has been judged to have less than satisfactory provision in any curriculum or WBL area, or less than satisfactory leadership and management, Ofsted or the ALI will visit the college to carry out monitoring inspections of the unsatisfactory areas.

As a result of the monitoring inspections, inspectors may judge that the curriculum or WBL areas, or leadership and management are satisfactory and that no further visits are required. If, after approximately 24 months, the college has not made sufficient progress to justify a judgement that

the curriculum or WBL area or leadership and management are satisfactory, the original grade for the area that continues to be unsatisfactory will remain on the college's record until the next full inspection within the cycle. Ofsted will inform the local LSC that provision remains unsatisfactory and the reasons why.

Date of the Re-Inspection Monitoring Visits

In accordance with the above procedures, re-inspection monitoring visits of science and mathematics, business administration, management and professional, and hospitality, leisure, sport and travel took place on 17 and 18 September 2002, 3 and 4 February 2003 and 21 and 22 October 2003.

Science and mathematics

In the November 2001 inspection, the quality of overall provision in this area was judged to be unsatisfactory. The following strengths and weaknesses were identified in the inspection report:

Strengths

- High retention rates on GNVQ intermediate science
- Thorough assessment practices
- Good resources for the teaching of science
- Effective workshops in mathematics and science.

Weaknesses

- Much unsatisfactory teaching
- Poor retention rates on two-year advanced-level courses

- Low pass rates on two-year advanced-level courses and GCSE mathematics
- A poor record of student attendance and punctuality
- Inappropriate recruitment to GCSE mathematics courses.

Following the re-inspection monitoring visits, inspectors judged that progress has been made in addressing the above weaknesses and that overall provision in this area is now **satisfactory**.

The quality of teaching has improved. Most teaching observed on the final monitoring visit was good or better and there was no unsatisfactory teaching. Teachers are making increasing use of ICT in lessons and are providing a greater range of activities to help students learn. Retention rates are satisfactory in most GCE A-level subjects but remain low in GCE AS sciences. Pass rates have improved in GCE A-level science subjects. In 2003 the pass rate in GCSE mathematics rose to above the national average. Attendance has improved. Students generally arrive at their lessons on time. Teachers and tutors deal appropriately with lateness. The college has introduced a basic mathematics qualification as a precursor to GCSE mathematics for students who achieved a low GCSE mathematics grade at school. The number of students achieving GCSE mathematics at grades A*-C has increased and in 2002, the latest year for which reliable data are available, the pass rate in the basic numeracy course was high. Curriculum management has improved. Students are placed on appropriate courses and their progress is monitored carefully. However, the college does not subscribe to a national value-added scheme and individual target setting for students is imprecise.

Business administration, management and professional

In the November 2001 inspection, the quality of overall provision in this area was judged to be unsatisfactory. The following strengths and weaknesses were identified in the inspection report:

Strengths

- Wide range of courses and good internal progression routes
- High pass rates on Chartered Institute of Marketing courses
- Some good pass rates on GNVQ courses

- Good portfolios of evidence on work-based learning
- Good support for students

Weaknesses

- Poor pass rates on management and professional and GCE AS/A-level courses
- Low retention rates on two-year full-time business courses
- Much poor and unsatisfactory teaching
- Lack of assessment of key skills in the workplace
- Poor co-ordination and recording of students' progress on management and professional courses
- Ineffective strategies to improve pass rates

Following the re-inspection monitoring visits, inspectors judged that progress has been made in addressing the above weaknesses and that overall provision in this area is now **satisfactory**.

Pass rates on management and professional courses have improved and are above the national average. Pass rates on GCE AS/A-level courses vary. In GCE AS/A-level business the pass rate has improved, but in GCE AS/A-level accounts it is low. Retention rates on most courses are satisfactory. However, retention on the AVCE (double award) in business has fallen to well below the national average. Staff development activities to improve the quality of teaching and learning have been effective. The quality of teaching has improved. Most teaching observed on the final visit was good or better and none was unsatisfactory. Teachers are giving more consideration to the individual needs of students and are using a broader range of activities to make learning interesting. The college no longer makes provision for modern apprentices in business administration and therefore the weakness in the assessment of key skills in the workplace no longer applies. The co-ordination and recording of students' progress on management and professional courses is effective. Teachers monitor progress that students make towards achieving their full qualification rather than individual units of it. More students are successfully completing the full qualification.

Hospitality, leisure, sport and travel

In the November 2001 inspection, the quality of overall provision in this area was judged to be unsatisfactory. The following strengths and weaknesses were identified in the inspection report:

Strengths

- Good written work by students
- Good standard of teaching for travel and hospitality
- Range of courses responsive to the needs of industry

Weaknesses

- Poor pass rates on travel, sports and leisure programmes
- Unsatisfactory retention rates on a number of programmes
- Unsatisfactory attendance at sports lessons
- Some poor accommodation
- Ineffective attempts of some managers to raise standards of achievement

Following the re-inspection monitoring visits, inspectors judged that progress has been made in addressing the above weaknesses and that overall provision in this area is now **satisfactory**.

The college has discontinued its provision in GCE AS/A-level PE where the pass rate had been persistently low. Pass rates were well above the national average on most travel, sports and leisure courses in 2003, and were excellent in GNVQ intermediate business and in the Advanced Certificate in Overseas Resort Representatives at level 3. Retention rates have also improved and are close to,

or above the national average in all courses. Attendance at sports lessons has improved and was good during the final monitoring visit. Accommodation is much improved. The college no longer uses off-site provision where accommodation was unsatisfactory and has developed new facilities at the main site, including new classrooms and a human performance laboratory. However, class sizes are large and some classrooms are too small to accommodate the students comfortably. A successful partnership with a local sports and leisure organisation provides students with access to excellent sports facilities. Tutorial provision has improved. Student progress is monitored more consistently. Tutors take prompt action if students fall behind with their work. Links with industry are good. Students following cabin crew courses undertake fire and evacuation training on the premises of an international airline. The college has developed a flourishing football academy in association with a Premier League football club. Teachers are well qualified, with much relevant and recent industrial experience.

There will be no further monitoring visits of the college because there are no remaining unsatisfactory / very weak areas.

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