

RE-INSPECTION OF BARNET COLLEGE

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Outcome of Re-Inspection

The overall provision in the curriculum area of engineering, and work-based learning (WBL) in the curriculum area of hairdressing and work-based learning (WBL) in business are now **satisfactory**.

Background

Barnet College was inspected in April 2002. 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 engineering, WBL hairdressing and WBL business 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 re-inspection of the unsatisfactory areas. As a result of the re-inspection, inspectors may judge that the curriculum or WBL areas, or leadership and management are satisfactory and that no further visits are required. Where leadership and management are satisfactory, all unsatisfactory provision will be re-inspected normally during one week.

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 Visit

In accordance with the above procedures, re-inspection of engineering, business work-based learning and hairdressing work-based learning took place on 26 to 29 April 2004.

Engineering

In the April 2002 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 and pass rates on part-time courses
- Good use of college ICT network to help students

Weaknesses

- Low pass rates on GNVQ courses
- Much unsatisfactory classroom teaching
- Insufficient monitoring of workshop practices in the mechanical workshop
- Lack of current industrial experience of a few staff
- Lack of student punctuality.

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

There has been progress in rectifying most of the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection, with the exception of students' lack of punctuality.

Pass rates on most courses have now improved on all courses, except on the AVCE double award, which is still 13 percentage points below the national average. The college has decided to cease running this course in 2004/05. The retention overall has been falling for the three years, 2002-2003, to the national average. However, in-year retention figures for 2003/04 show retention to be improving on all courses. During the re-inspection, students' attendance was good at 82%. However, students' punctuality was poor. In 60% of lessons seen, students were late and in a number of lessons fewer than 50% of the students were present at the start of the lesson. The standard of students' work is generally good.

Teaching and learning are now satisfactory or better. The use of detailed 'records of work' after each lesson contribute to improving teaching and learning. These are particularly detailed and are an example of good practice. They record the strengths and weaknesses of each lesson, record the teaching styles used and sometimes refer to individual students' progress in the lesson. Assignment briefs and marking of assessments are now satisfactory, and students comment that often written feedback is supported by substantial verbal feedback. However, errors in students' spelling and grammar are not corrected and some of the feedback from teachers also contained errors in spelling

and grammar.

All students entering engineering courses undertake an initial diagnostic assessment of their literacy and numeracy skills. Appropriate learning support is available for those students who need it. Overall, the tutorial support at the college is good.

The range of courses is small. It does not provide sufficient opportunities to practise practical skills that enable students to progress into work-based training or jobs. There is little evidence to show that the area is meeting the needs of the local community or the students. The single award AVCE is now delivered over two years, making it difficult for students to access higher education courses in engineering. There is also a lack of opportunity for able students to move on quickly on courses and achieve the qualification early. Students on some vocational courses have few opportunities for visits to engineering firms, talks given by outside speakers from industry, and practical work.

While accommodation is adequate for the current courses some rooms are in a poor decorative state. Most of these rooms also lack any stimulating wall displays to generate interest in engineering. Resources are satisfactory. However, there are no periodicals on engineering topics in the learning resource centre. Staff are appropriately qualified and most have undertaken staff development this year. The college is addressing the weakness concerning industrial updating for staff .

Business Work-Based Learning

In the April 2002 inspection, the quality of overall provision for work-based learning in this area was judged to be unsatisfactory. The following strengths and weaknesses were identified in the inspection report:

Strengths

- Good teaching
- Good progression routes
- Learners value the support they receive

Weaknesses

- Poor completion of MA frameworks, low attendance
- Pass rates on MA poor; learners failing key skills assessments
- Individual learning plans not regularly updated

- Employers not involved in progress review

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

There are significant improvements in Modern Apprenticeship (MA) Framework completion rates since the last inspection for work-based learners. On NVQ courses at level 2, 3 and 4, pass rates are above national expectations. The number of students recruited is small.

Relationships between college staff and employers are supportive. A newly designed employer pack is provided to employers and a college survey demonstrates that employers are aware of the information in the new packs. However, employers are not briefed in sufficient detail about the requirements and possibilities for supporting learners doing NVQs. They are not involved in progress review. Summative assessment is good, supported by effective internal verification. Other assessment feedback to learners is provided in college evening lessons by teachers. Assessor visits to employer premises are infrequent.

The leadership of work-based learning programmes is now satisfactory. There is improved understanding and use of data, which is used to monitor students' attendance and success. Interventions to encourage students to achieve key skills and provide good access to key skills' tests have been effective. There is good overall liaison about work-based learning provision, but good practice is not shared. Recruitment to AAT courses is low and declining employers are insufficiently engaged, especially in the many micro-businesses in the locality. Targets for improved modern apprenticeship framework completion, retention and key skills achievement have been met. No progress has been made in the use of individual learning plans for students.

Hairdressing Work-Based Learning

In the April 2002 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 and pass rate in Beauty and Complementary Therapy
- Good practical standards in Hairdressing, Beauty and Complementary Therapy
- Lively, stimulating teaching in evening lessons

Weaknesses

- Unsatisfactory pass rates in NVQ Level 1 Hairdressing

- Unsatisfactory assessment procedures
- Unsatisfactory quality assurance
- Poor retention and pass rate on Modern Apprenticeship Frameworks

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

Retention for work-based learning (WBL) is improving and in 2002/03 was similar to the average reported on foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA) inspections. Achievement of full framework is still unsatisfactory, though pass rates are improving. Students' achievement of the NVQ level 2 hairdressing is now above national expectation. Students' attendance rates have improved and now reach the college target of 80%. Key Skills are now embedded into students' programmes.

Although foundation modern apprenticeships (FMA) numbers are still small, currently 19, they are increasing. At the time of the re-inspection, there were no learners on the AMA programme. The standard of students' work is satisfactory.

Good use is made of the newly developed individual learning plans for learners, but they are insufficiently informed by initial diagnostic testing. Trainee reviews occur regularly and learners are set realistic measurable targets and appropriate action plans. Relationships between college staff, employers and trainees are good and are supported by the work-based learning co-ordinator and college assessors. Improvements to the reception area and increased salon accommodation have been achieved since inspection in 2002 and are offering improved opportunities for assessment.

Management of work-based learning is satisfactory with clear lines of responsibility. Staff have a better understanding of data and its use to support the improvement of teaching and learning. Quality assurance arrangements have improved since the time of the last inspection.

There will be no further re-inspection of the college because there are no remaining unsatisfactory areas.