

RE-INSPECTION OF NORTON RADSTOCK COLLEGE

Published March 2005

Outcome of Re-Inspection

The overall provision in literacy and numeracy and hairdressing is now **satisfactory**.

Background

Norton Radstock College was inspected in February 2004. 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 Hairdressing and Literacy and Numeracy which were found to be less than satisfactory.

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 where leadership and management are unsatisfactory or very weak. Where a college has been judged to have less than satisfactory leadership and management, or less than satisfactory provision in solely WBL, inspectors from Ofsted or the ALI will visit the college to carry out monitoring inspections of the less than satisfactory areas. As a result of the re-inspection monitoring visits, inspectors may judge that previously less than satisfactory areas of provision, or leadership and management, are now satisfactory and that no further visits are required. Where leadership and management are satisfactory, but there is curriculum provision that is less than satisfactory, there will be no monitoring visits. All less than satisfactory provision will be re-inspected, normally during one week, within two years of the original inspection.

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

In accordance with the above procedures, re-inspection of literacy and numeracy and hairdressing took during the week commencing 21 February 2005.

Literacy and numeracy

In the February 2004 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 retention rates on most courses
- good pass rates on a range of courses
- successful innovative courses in partnership with local employers.

Weaknesses

- low pass rates on level 1 key skills communication and application of number
- too much unsatisfactory teaching
- insufficient expertise of key skills staff in literacy and numeracy
- insufficient additional literacy, numeracy and dyslexia support
- inadequate quality assurance.

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**.

Students' achievements have improved since the last inspection. There are good pass rates in key skills in both communication and application of number at level 1. In key skills communication at level 1, the pass rate has improved from 19% in 2003 to 59% in 2004; in key skills application of number at level 1, the pass rate has improved from 18% in 2003 to 60% in 2004. The pass rate for GCSE mathematics has improved from 62% in 2003 to 89% in 2004. There are also good pass rates in the national tests in both literacy and numeracy; the pass rate for levels 1 and 2 in literacy is 92% in 2004/2005, and the pass rate for levels 1 and 2 in numeracy is 84%. However, the pass rate in key skills communication at level 2 has declined from 59% in 2003 to 29% in 2004, and the pass rate in key skills application of number at level 2 has declined from 46% in 2003 to 29% in 2004. Standards of work seen in lessons are satisfactory, and sometimes good. Students' verbal skills are well developed, and the standard of written work is good.

The quality of teaching and learning has improved, with some examples of excellent and innovative

teaching. Teaching is well planned and meets the needs of individual students. Learning outcomes are shared with the students. There is effective use of ICT to reinforce skills development. In one excellent lesson in engineering, a powerpoint presentation was used imaginatively to demonstrate the interaction of engine components, and to reinforce the spelling of complex words. Key skills teaching is firmly embedded within the vocational areas, and is highly relevant to students. Good use is made of well-devised, vocationally relevant assignments to consolidate learning. Students participate well in lessons, and make good progress. The skills of the teachers now match the requirements for the course.

Curriculum management is satisfactory. Procedures such as initial assessment have been improved, and are being effectively implemented throughout the curriculum area. Some good examples were seen of detailed individual learning plans, with clear short-term targets, which are well understood by the students. Good practice is now shared within the department, but could be further cascaded throughout the college. There is now a strategy for literacy and numeracy development across the college, but this needs to be more comprehensive. The self-assessment report remains insufficiently rigorous, in particular in the analysis of data.

Hairdressing

In the February 2004 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 most courses
- good practical skills developed in NVQ level 2 beauty therapy and NVQ level 3 hairdressing
- good punctuality and attendance
- effective enrichment activities.

Weaknesses

- unsatisfactory teaching in hairdressing
- inadequate resources limiting development of professional skills
- poor assessment practice in hairdressing

- insufficient opportunities for hairdressing students to progress
- poor management and quality assurance of the hairdressing curriculum.

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**.

Pass rates are high on full-time courses and retention on all programmes is above the national average. On NVQ level 1 hairdressing, pass rates have remained at 100% over the last three years, and on level 2 hairdressing pass rates for full-time students are above the national average. On level 3 hairdressing, pass rates were high in 2001/02 and 2002/03, and 4% above the average in 2003/04. Attendance is high at 93%.

The standards of work seen in lessons are satisfactory overall. Students' practical skills are well developed at level 2. However, at level 3 students' creative skills are limited. The standard of students' key skills is very good; for example, students have designed their own salon leaflets, integrating the key skills of communication, application of number, and IT. Their research skills are very good, and they have developed comprehensive, vocationally relevant portfolios.

There was no unsatisfactory teaching observed at the re-inspection, but there are few examples of very good teaching, other than in key skills. Lesson plans clearly identify measurable learning outcomes and are now well structured. Paper resources to support learning are of a good quality. There is limited use of ICT to improve the quality of lessons. The teaching of key skills is very good. Teachers meet the needs of the individual student, and tasks are fully integrated into the vocational context.

The quality of assessment is good. Assessment is well planned for all full-time students, and supports their progression well. However, due to staffing difficulties, the assessment of work-based learners is inadequate in the work place, and impedes the learners' progress. Very few work-based learners progress from level 2 to level 3.

Resources are very good and reflect commercial standards. The purpose-built salons provide a good environment for learning, and are much appreciated by the students. The close proximity of the salons to a hotel and spa complex enhances the learning opportunities for students at level 3 who are seeking employment in the beauty and leisure industry.

Management in hairdressing is satisfactory. Internal verification systems are rigorous, and the external verification reports are very good. Communication within the department is good, as is curriculum management. However, the self-assessment report is insufficiently rigorous, both in the analysis of data and in the setting of specific targets.

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

© Crown copyright 2005. This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced verbatim without adaptation, and the source and date of publication are stated.
Inspection reports are available on the Ofsted web site (www.ofsted.gov.uk).

Office for
Standards
in Education

