

ANNUAL ASSESSMENT VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Name of College: Lincoln College
Date of visit: 11 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

How well do learners achieve?

- Inspections of Lincoln College and Newark and Sherwood College in 2006/07 considered achievement and standards for the two colleges separately. Following the merger on 1 January 2007, the college has now merged its data concerning learners' achievements in 2005/06.
- The overall college success rate for long courses in 2005/06 was similar to the national average.
- Success rates for 16-18 year old learners in 2005/06 were similar to the national average at level 1, significantly above the national average at level 2 and slightly above the national average at level 3. These comparisons are based on the national averages for 2004/05.
- Success rates for adults in 2005/06 were significantly below the national average at level 1 and significantly above the national averages at levels 2 and 3. These comparisons are based on the national averages for 2004/05.
- The overall proportion of learners retained on programmes in 2006/07 is slightly higher than in 2005/06. Particular improvements have been noted in the proportion of adults retained on level 1 and level 3 programmes. There has, however, been a decline in the proportion of students aged 16-18 year retained on level 2 programmes.

Quality of education and training

What actions has the college taken to improve the quality of teaching and learning? What has been the impact of these actions?

- The inspection report for Lincoln College identified good teaching and learning as a key strength. The report for Newark and Sherwood College noted a key strength regarding effective measures to improve the quality of teaching and learning, but the accuracy of the internal assessment of the quality of teaching and learning was a key area for improvement.

- The merged college now uses the observation of teaching and learning arrangements previously employed by Lincoln College. All teaching staff are observed annually by a team of trained and experienced observers. Observations include lessons and group tutorials, and encompass reviews of schemes of work and session plans. The observation team undertake a standardisation procedure prior to each period of observations. External moderation of observations take place as part of a peer review process involving Lincoln College and several other colleges. Observation records are also reviewed by senior managers and the quality team, who produce summary reports about teaching and learning to inform self-assessment and staff development.
- Staff whose lessons are judged to be outstanding are encouraged to share good practice through the individual performance review process and by participating in professional development activities. Good practice is also shared through peer observations within curriculum areas. Staff whose lessons are judged to be inadequate are provided with support from a teaching and learning mentor.
- The college has focused staff development in teaching and learning on the issues identified during the inspections in 2006/07. These include promoting the more effective use of integrated learning technology (ILT), the importance of active learning and the use of assessment to plan learning and review progress.
- It is difficult to compare the overall quality of teaching and learning in 2006/07 with that in previous years because of the merger of two colleges using different systems. College data suggests, however, that improvements have been made, particularly with respect to the quality of learning in lessons.

How has the college further enhanced its good identification of, and provision for, additional learning needs?

- The inspections in 2006/07 judged the support for learners to be a key strength of both colleges.
- The identification of, and provision for, additional learning needs remains a strength of the merged college and has been enhanced during 2006/07. Improvements, through sharing good practice, have been made in the assessment of individual needs of learners prior to joining the college and in the effectiveness of transition planning for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. In addition, learning support workshops are to be introduced in September 2007 to provide drop-in facilities to help learners further develop their literacy and numeracy skills.
- Individual learning plans for additional support are reviewed regularly and provide the college with information about the progress made by learners. Success rates on courses that receive additional support are generally

higher than for the college as a whole and when compared to national averages. Internal progression between different levels is also good, particularly from entry level to level 1. The college recognises that better use could be made of assessment data to monitor more effectively the benefits of additional learning support.

Leadership and management

Is the college making good progress on its post-inspection action plan?

- The post-inspection action plan, including issues identified in the inspections of both colleges prior to merger, was approved by the college standards committee in March 2007. The plan makes clear reference to self-assessment and inspection reports, and forms part of the annual quality improvement cycle in 2006/07.
- The college has comprehensive self-assessment and quality improvement arrangements. Good use has been made of peer review processes with other further education colleges to validate judgements in the self-assessment report and to consider the appropriateness of the post-inspection action plan.
- Effective use has been made of individual performance reviews for all staff to drive forward actions in the post-inspection action plan, with a particular focus on improving success rates across all programmes.
- Progress against the post-inspection action plan was reviewed in May 2007. Progress is generally good, facilitated by the sharing of good practice, although some actions have been delayed slightly by an ongoing reorganisation of staff in the college.

