



Croydon College

Re-inspection report

Audience Post-sixteen	Published June 2007	Provider reference 130432
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Introduction

Croydon College was inspected in May 2005. Inspectors from the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) 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 the provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD) which was found to be less than satisfactory. Ofsted is responsible for re-inspecting all provision that is less than satisfactory within two years of the original inspection. If inadequate areas of learning or aspects of provision remain inadequate following re-inspection, inspectors will continue to monitor progress at annual assessment visits, but the areas will not be re-graded. They will be re-inspected during the full college inspection.

The less than satisfactory provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities was re-inspected on 22 and 23 May 2007. The outcomes of the re-inspection are as follows.

Curriculum area	Original grade	Re-inspection grade
Provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities	4	3

Context

The college offers full-time courses in independent living skills and skills for working life from entry level 1 to entry level 2. A total of 16 students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are on discrete programmes and a further 31 students follow vocationally based programmes.

Strengths

- Good development of skills
- Effective target setting and monitoring of students' progress in lessons
- Good support for students on courses for independent living skills

Areas for improvement

- Insufficient use of ILT and audio visual equipment to support learning
- Insufficient variety of learning activity in some lessons
- Insufficient support for students on entry level 2 skills for working life courses

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Success rates on independent living courses fell in 2005/6 but remained above national averages. Other qualifications offered over the last 3 years have now been discontinued. Students develop their confidence and personal and social skills well. The quality of learners' work is satisfactory. Learners' targets are generally specific, closely monitored and regularly reviewed but there are inconsistencies on the entry level 2 course. All learners are positive about their learning experience and make satisfactory progress.

Quality of provision

The quality of provision is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and improving. In all lessons individual learning needs, including literacy and numeracy, are taken into account both in planning and teaching. In some lessons there is insufficient variety of learning activity and little use is made of available audio visual aids and information and communications technology (ICT). The range of programmes has been substantially changed and is now satisfactory with clear progression routes into vocational training and work.

There is insufficient support for students on entry level 2 skills for working life courses. The programme is underdeveloped. Students were transferred to this course in January 2007. Not all assessments have taken place and target setting on individual learning plans are inconsistent. For students on the independent living skills courses, students receive good, effectively targeted, individual support

Leadership and management

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Managers have implemented the post-inspection action plan and many of the weaknesses have been addressed. Regular staff development has improved aspects of teaching, learning and the recording and monitoring of student progress. Re-structuring of programmes in the current academic year has impacted adversely on in-class support for entry level 2 learners. It is too early to judge the full impact of all measures.

ANNUAL ASSESSMENT VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Name of College: Croydon College
Date of visit: 22 and 23 May 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

14-16 provision

- Success rates for students aged 14-16 improved in 2005/06 by 17% to 72%. On the increased flexibility programme pass rates were 93% at level 2, and 72% at level 1. Students on entry level English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) courses achieved pass rates below the national average. However, in 2006/07 the college introduced a course more appropriate to the age group and pass rates are predicted to be high.
- There are currently about 500 students aged 14-16 on a variety of vocational programmes. However, demand for places at the college is greater than the number of places available. The college has good systems in place to ensure that students are on the appropriate course according to their needs and abilities, and retention is high. Student ambassadors are used effectively in college to support practical work and help students outside of lessons. The college has robust relationships with its partner schools to ensure that the welfare and learning support provided by the schools is effective and timely.

Key skills

- The college has been slow in dealing with the poor success rates of its key skills provision. This was a key weakness at the previous inspection and the latest self assessment report continues to highlight key skills as an area for improvement.
- Strategies are now in place that include the introduction of basic skills qualifications at levels 1 and 2. There is improved clarification of management accountability for key skills. College data for 2006/07 shows an improvement in attendance and pass rates of tests. However, the full impact has yet to be seen. The college plans to integrate key skills

learning fully into the vocational curriculum for the 2007/08 academic year.

Quality of education and training

Improvements to teaching and learning

- The college continues to refine and improve the process of judging the quality of teaching and learning. As part of this refinement, the proportion of lessons awarded grades of good or better reduced from 2005/06 to 2006/07 by 3% points to 69%. The college accepts that there may still be some over grading in the system and from September 2007 will cease advising teaching staff of the actual lesson that will be observed. The observation of teaching and learning system (OTL) is thorough with good action planning for staff receiving satisfactory or inadequate grades. Standardisation of OTL is good.
- At the previous inspection, good or better teaching at entry level and level 1 provision was low. This has been much improved and both levels are generally in line with levels 2 and 3.
- Since the previous annual assessment visit (AAV) the college has introduced further measures to support weaker teachers and programme areas. From September 2007 the college plans to introduce induction training for new teachers called 'get up to speed'. The college is currently in the process of recruiting a new Director post that will give even greater focus to individualised student learning. Most staff are observed on a yearly basis, although the graded teaching and learning policy states all staff will be observed.

Additional Learning Support (ALS) for students

- Students are assessed for literacy and numeracy needs during their induction. However, as with the previous inspection, take-up of support is variable across the college. In 2006/07 fewer than 50% of full time, and 14% of part time, students who were assessed as having a learning support need accepted support, although staff confirm that they rigorously encourage students to do so.

- College data for 2005/06 indicates that those students receiving support had better retention rates, but similar pass rates, to those who did not receive support. Retention and achievement data for students in receipt of ALS lacks consistency of improvement between full and part time students and from 2005/06 to 2006/07. In most curriculum areas students' progress is effectively monitored through individual learning plans (ILP). Students are generally aware of their individual learning targets and what they need to do to improve.

Leadership and management

Impact of restructuring and greater staff accountability

- There is a very clear focus from management with regard to developing strategies to improve provision. Re-structuring was quickly implemented in 2006 and newly appointed post holders are beginning to address key improvement challenges. All staff have a clear understanding of the college's main target for 2007/08 and are focused on implementing and accepting greater accountability measures.
- The management information system has been further developed to support more detailed information at course/student level and is used well. All programmes are set success rate targets and these are closely monitored. Half termly reviews and course risk assessment is an effective measure of monitoring course and college progress in meeting its yearly targets. Action planning from reviews is clear and focused on continuous improvement.
- The college has made steady progress in improving success rates over the past few years. Inspectors agree with the latest self assessment report that overall success rates are satisfactory. Between 2004/05 and 2005/06, success rates improved 4% points above the sector national average. However, even with this improvement, for 2005/06, the College was 1% point below the national average. Short course provision is a positive feature of overall success rates but 19+ provision at levels 2 and 3 is a weaker aspect. Success rates for AS/A level provision are above national averages, however, against a generally improving college trend, this provision declined 2% points.

- There are clear signs that re-structuring and greater accountability measures are further supporting overall success rate improvements. The college is forecasting that for 2006/07 it will increase success rates by 9% points. The forecast overall is 78%. All departments, other than skills for life, are expected to improve upon success rate targets set by the college. Short course provision continues to be a positive feature. Work based learning success rates are steadily improving and are above national averages.
- The college has been slow to address improvements in skills for life and key skills provision. The College recognises this is a key area for improvement and has recently appointed Skills for Life director.

Course reviews

- The latest self assessment report states that there are inconsistencies in the quality of some course reports. Since then, the college is confident that a new management structure, improvements in the monitoring of student and course progress against targets and the introduction of the quality improvement review process (QIR) will support and endorse the future findings in course reports. QIR is the systematic internal mock inspection process of individual programme areas. During the 'inspection' the programme area is assessed against a range of information. For example, the programme self assessment report, data and observations of teaching and learning.
- All managers are clear about their new roles and responsibilities. Managers actively and regularly involve staff in the development and review of action plans for improvement. A non teaching day took place in the autumn term to review course reports and further develop action plans. All teaching staff have opportunities to feed their views into course reviews and self assessment. QIR's are used to measure against latest course reviews and self assessments for comparability of findings.

Sharing of best practice

- The observation of teaching and learning is effectively used to share best practice. Teachers graded at outstanding or good are given specific action plans to share and support colleagues either within the department or

cross college. Curriculum and management team meetings are used to highlight best practice opportunities and plan training that is directly linked to the collective findings of teaching observations. 'Learning' days are used to focus on cross college and subject specific improvements and staff training. Advanced Practitioners are used well to support staff and share best practice. The college plans to increase the number of advanced practitioners.

Changes to ESOL provision

- Since the last AAV the college has closed its external ESOL provision and cancelled the contract with the franchised provider. Prospective students are encouraged to enrol directly at the college although it is too soon to judge the effectiveness of this measure.
- The college has taken clear actions to improve its internal ESOL provision. These are resulting in improved achievements at all levels, and for all age groups. The college recognises that retention on some of the courses, although improving, is still an area for improvement.

Any themes from the pre-visit analysis not explored during the visit:

- No

Any other observations from the visit not identified in the pre-visit analysis:

- None