



East Surrey College

Re-inspection report

Audience Post-sixteen	Published June 2007	Provider reference 130824
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Introduction

East Surrey College was inspected in May 2005. 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 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.

Engineering was re-inspected on 22-23 May 2007. The outcomes of the re-inspection are as follows.

Programme Area	Original grade	Re-inspection grade
Engineering	4	3

Context

The college offers full-time and part-time courses from level 1 to level 3 in engineering and motor vehicle engineering. At the time of the inspection, there were 220 students aged 16-18, and 117 adult learners. There were 2 apprentices and 17 advanced apprentices on engineering work-based learning programmes. There were also 182 pupils aged 14 to 16 from local schools taking part in engineering courses.

Strengths

- high success rates on most courses
- good attention to health and safety
- good accommodation and teaching resources
- effective use of individual learning plans to monitor progress.

Areas for improvement

- low success rates on advanced level qualifications for students aged 16 to 18
- low success rates for apprentices
- poor setting of aims and objectives in lesson plans
- lack of assessment strategies in schemes of work
- missed opportunities for assessing key skills in lessons.

Achievement and standards

Students' achievements and the standard of their work are satisfactory. Success rates have improved significantly over the last three years, and on long courses were above the national average in 2005/06. Success rates for students aged 16 to 18 on advanced level courses are low. The proportion of apprentices who successfully complete their full qualification is also low, although changes to the curriculum offered by the college are leading to improved success rates both for apprentices and full-time students at the college. Students' attendance and punctuality are good.

The standard of work produced by students is often good. Most students demonstrate a sound understanding of their work and develop good practical hand skills. For example, first year students were confident in the use of both powered and hand tools to undertake a variety of servicing tasks on a motor vehicle.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In the better lessons, students are engaged through good use of a range of techniques, including effective use of video and diagrams to illustrate good practice. Although lesson planning is satisfactory, aims and objectives are not always clearly articulated, and teachers do not always check that students have understood. Opportunities to assess key skills in lessons are often missed. Coverage of assessment strategies in schemes of work is weak. There is particularly good attention to health and safety in the workshops.

Accommodation and resources are good, with appropriate specialist equipment and good teaching resources. Students' needs are met through a good range of courses, and appropriate progression routes.

Support and guidance for students are good. Pastoral support is good. Effective use is made of individual learning plans to monitor students' progress, particularly through reviews at which students agree clear and measurable targets with their teachers.

Leadership and management

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Communications are good. Staff are clear about what is expected of them, and their performance is carefully monitored. Curriculum development has been responsive both to external demand and the interests of learners. Specialist resources are good. The promotion of equal opportunities is satisfactory, and learners with

learning difficulties are effectively supported. The self-assessment report provides a concise and broadly accurate analysis of the quality of provision.

ANNUAL ASSESSMENT VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Name of college: East Surrey
Date of visit: 22-23 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

What is the trend in success rates, both in the college overall and in different sector subject areas? Are improvements in success rates likely to continue into 2006/07?

- College data for 2005/06 show a significant increase in success rates on long courses. In 2004/05, overall success rates were at 57%, significantly below the national average. In 2005/06, they rose considerably to around 68%, which is in line with the national average for that year. Success rates have risen consistently in all major sector subject areas, including information and communications technology (ICT), where they were low in the previous year. Pass rates in most areas are good; retention rates are generally satisfactory or better. Provision in ICT with an external contractor, where success rates were low, has been withdrawn.
- In-year data for 2006/07 show a further significant increase in the proportion of students who complete their courses. Assuming that pass rates remain high, it is likely that final success rates for 2006/07 will be above the national average.

What strategies are being used to improve attendance at lessons, and how effective are they?

- College data show that overall college attendance, to date, for 2006/07 is 83%, an increase of two percentage points on 2005/06. Students and teachers are aware that the improvement of attendance and punctuality is a college priority and are aware of overall college policies to address this. However, the 'cause for concern' system is not consistently applied across

courses and different teachers apply different measures to address poor attendance and lack of punctuality.

What is current performance on WBL programmes?

- Overall success rates for apprentices have improved over recent years. In 2005/06, overall completion of frameworks for advanced apprentices was 30%, which is significantly below the national average, and 51% for apprentices, which is only just below the national average. Timely success rates are just above the national average for advanced apprentices, at 28%, and well above for apprentices, at 42%. Outcomes were poorest in construction, which had the lowest number of learners. Based upon current learners' progress the college is suggesting marked improvement for success rates overall in 2006/07, to well above national averages, both overall and for timely success.

Quality of education and training

What steps are being taken to improve further the quality of teaching and learning? How effective is the college's internal lesson observation scheme? What impact is this having, and how does the college know?

- The college attaches a high priority to the improvement of teaching and learning and teachers are aware that it is a high priority. Effective leadership provides high status and cohesion to a range of measures to improve teaching and learning. The college's scheme for internal observation of lessons is central to the improvement strategy. This is linked closely to staff development, both generic and to meet the particular needs of individuals. The strategy also promotes team work by teachers to share experiences and practice in teaching. Teachers are also helped to improve their teaching through the use of teaching and learning toolkits, and through the effectiveness of the programme of commercial/industrial updating.
- The college's internal lesson observation scheme is well established and highly regarded by teachers as an aid to their improvement. It is a substantial scheme that provides sound evidence for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning and for introducing steps to improve. Moderation, both internal and external, is rigorous. The involvement of senior staff from local schools in the process is particularly innovative.

Observers' judgements and grades are largely accurate. In a minority of observation documents reviewed by inspectors, however, it was not sufficiently clear how the strengths and areas for improvement identified in the lesson were derived from the observers' descriptive account of the lesson. In some, also, there was an overemphasis on the process of teaching with insufficient reference to judgements on learning. The college makes good use of the outcomes of the observation scheme to help direct its improvement strategy and to help managers and teachers focus on continuing improvement.

- Inspection evidence and the college's lesson observation scheme indicate that teaching and learning are improving overall and that the amount of inadequate teaching is significantly reduced. However, as the college recognises, the proportion of teaching that is good or better needs to be raised. There are also significant differences in the quality of teaching between areas of learning.

How effective are strategies to make the college more responsive to employers? What progress has the college made in seeking Action for Business accreditation?

- Good progress is being made to improve the college's engagement with, and response to, employers. The college achieved Action for Business Colleges' accreditation in April 2007. It has a cohesive and effective management and operational structure to promote employer engagement. Local employers and businesses make a significant contribution to the delivery of courses. Many curriculum areas, and their students and teachers, benefit from the expertise of employers and the time they give to the college. The range of employer engagement targets demonstrates the wide scope of the strategy and the college's determination to raise its profile further with employers.

The effectiveness of group tutorials is cited as an area for improvement. How effective are tutorials, and how does the college know? How successful is the integration of 'Every Child Matters' themes into the tutorial framework?

- Students receive good pastoral and academic support. The close integration between the wide range of cross-college services and the delivery of the curriculum is a particular strength. Students are positive about their tutorials, which contain an appropriate mixture of group

activities and one-to-one discussion between tutors and students. 'Every Child Matters' themes are built into the tutorial framework, but the college recognises that not all tutors may be equally adept at managing group tutorials that cover some of the themes. The availability of high quality learning resources to support group tutorials is an area for development, as is the need to ensure consistency in the quality, rather than the content, of tutorials. 'Every Child Matters' themes are also covered in twice-yearly theme weeks, which contain a range of thought-provoking activities and events connected with citizenship, equality and diversity, and other matters that contribute to students' broader education.

How successful are the courses offered to 14-16 year-olds? What role is the college playing in local 14-19 developments?

- The college has a particularly wide range of provision in several curriculum areas for a large number of school pupils aged 14 to 16. Both in respect of students' achievements and of progression to full-time courses at the college, the provision is successful. College-wide quality assurance arrangements are applied equally to this provision. Links with local schools have improved and are good. The college plays a key role in three 14-19 local learning networks. Plans for involvement in the specialist 14-19 diplomas are relatively modest thus far, although evidence suggests that this is not due to any reluctance on the college's behalf.

Leadership and management

How effective are course reviews in improving performance? How effectively do course leaders use data to assess performance and plan for improvements?

- Course reviews are a critical part of the quality assurance and self-assessment arrangements in the college. A particularly helpful checklist guides course leaders through the review process. Data are used quite well to inform judgements and plan for improvements. Course leaders and curriculum managers regard the process as very helpful in analysing the quality of course provision and determining what needs to be done to bring about further improvements.

How are equality and diversity promoted through the curriculum and by other means?

- Equality and diversity are well promoted through the twice-yearly theme weeks, and through a range of posters and displays around the college. The internal lesson observation scheme seeks to report on the promotion of equal opportunities through teaching and learning. College managers recognise that insufficient evidence has been collected to ascertain the extent to which equality and diversity are promoted through the curriculum.

How effective are arrangements for the management of work-based learning?

- Work-based learning is effectively managed, and this is leading to improvements in the performance of apprentices. There is a sensible central focus for overall coordination, within Employer Services, with all other aspects of provision integrated into normal college arrangements for the curriculum. Course delivery is clearly the responsibility of areas of learning.

To what extent does the evidence support the grades awarded in the self-assessment report, both cross-college and in curriculum areas?

- The self-assessment report is clear and evaluative. There is no obvious disjunction between the evidence presented and the judgements made, although in one curriculum area the strengths and areas for improvement identified do not in themselves present a sufficiently strong case for the grade awarded. In the curriculum area reports, the absence of an overarching judgement on students' outcomes, and the sometimes selective citing of specific qualifications, makes it more difficult for the reader to be clear about students' achievements and standards. Nevertheless, evidence from this visit suggests that there is a good degree of accuracy in self-assessment. This is helped by the effective use of external experts and stakeholders in the self-assessment process and the moderation of judgements. The way in which the cross-college section of the report is compiled leads to a degree of unnecessary repetition.

Is provision in engineering now satisfactory or better?

- The unsatisfactory provision in engineering was re-inspected during this visit and is now satisfactory.

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

- None

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

- The college has made very good progress in recovering from a poor inspection in 2003. In addition to the clear improvement in students' outcomes, sound financial management and improvements in the collection and use of management information have contributed to the college's current secure position.