

ANNUAL ASSESSMENT VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Name of College: Beaumont College
Date of visit: 26 April 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 have the principles of RARPA been implemented? Have the recent changes to the recording of learner achievement brought about significant improvements?

- The pilot stage for the changes to the recording of learner achievement was implemented in September 2006 with the introduction of the electronic journal to record individual learning and progress. The journal structure is comprehensive; it includes a range of targets as well as initial and baseline assessments and the outcomes of six-weekly benchmarks of progress. The journal notes section enables all staff to record and share relevant information about the learner and required actions. Although, there has been a significant amount of training and support for staff, the recording of progress seen during the visit did not sufficiently indicate the level of learner progress made.

What strategies has the college put into place to monitor learners' punctuality and to bring about improvements?

- The college is aware of the issues relating to learner punctuality. A range of strategies has been implemented to monitor and improve learner punctuality, including the targeting of additional support resources in the morning/breakfast and lunchtime periods. Any individual issues are communicated with the relevant lecturer. A curriculum manager now monitors punctuality across the college on a weekly basis.

Quality of education and training

What processes are in place to eliminate the unsatisfactory teaching and improve the satisfactory element to make it good?

- The college's observation of teaching and learning policy was updated in December following a peer referencing meeting. The aim is to train all teachers to become observers and so spread best practice; currently all teaching staff are observed once each term. The college successfully spreads best practice through peer support, staff development and qualifications, team teaching and artists in residence. Records of lesson observations

indicate that there has been measurable improvement in the proportion of good or better teaching over the previous year.

How well does the college gather and respond to learners suggestions, comments and complaints?

- A student union has been established and the complaints procedure has been revised. However, it is too early to make an overall judgment. There has been a recent consultation with learners to identify their preferences and suggestions have been sought. The college has had a recent successful lottery grant and a 'young persons participation co-ordinator' has been appointed who will further develop this area.

Leadership and management

Has SCOPE maintained the recent progress to address weaknesses in accommodation, strategic planning, governance and finance?

- Scope has made great strides in addressing significant weaknesses identified at the 2005 inspection. The charity has recently invested over one million pounds to refurbish the existing building to better match the facilities to learner need.

Accommodation

- Significant improvements to the teaching areas have been made with better classrooms, specialist areas, a day students' room and personal care facilities, installation of hoists and tracking systems and a staff training facility. Residential facilities are to be refurbished during summer 2007. A feasibility study has been completed and a co-location project planned to move and rebuild the college on an HE campus. Negotiations and planning have begun to take the project forward.

Strategic planning

- There is unity of purpose between the college and Scope. Collaborative strategic planning has taken place and a Beaumont five year strategic plan, with fourteen key performance indicators, has been established. This is regularly reviewed against the operating statements of each senior manager and the self assessment report. All teaching and support staff now have appraisal linked to performance management.

Governance

- The multi professional experienced Governing body now have a good track record of support for the college and they have contributed significantly to recent improvements. Training has been provided to the Governors about safeguarding and the recent equalities legislation. A central recruitment and vetting record is in place and is regularly updated.

Finance

- Records indicate that the college now operates a breakeven budget. A LSC provider financial assurance audit from November 2006 agreed that the college had made satisfactory progress in implementing the recommendations from the PFA report in December 2005. Ten of the fourteen post inspection actions had been implemented and the remaining four were ongoing.

How well has the college addressed the requirements of recent equalities legislation?

- Most staff have received RR(A)A and Disability Discrimination Act training. The Disability Equality Duty Action Plan and statement have been produced and the scheme is well underway. Monitoring data is being collected and analysed for both learners and staff. However, monitoring and analysis with regard to the Race Relations Act is underdeveloped. A 'draft' race equality plan has been written but it is yet to be implemented.

Has the recent annual quality improvement cycle brought about a significant impact?

- Appropriate steps have been taken to improve performance. The quality cycle has been through the first year of operation and is proving to be a successful tool for monitoring progress. However, the full impact of the quality cycle is not yet apparent and policy documents require review.
- The college is determined to bring about significant improvements especially in raising standards further, particularly through improving teaching and learning in some areas, and monitoring students' progress more rigorously. The curriculum has been significantly developed to make it more appropriate to need. However the college recognises that there is still much work to do in these areas.

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

- Developments for a comprehensive MIS system

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

- None