

ANNUAL ASSESSMENT VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Name of College: Pendleton College
Date of visit: 19 June 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

Have achievement and standards continued to improve?

- Success rates have continued to improve over the three year period 2003/04 to 2005/06 across all levels and for all age groups. At level 2 for learners aged 16-18 success rates improved from 77% to 87% and at level 3 from 79% to 87%. For learners aged over 19 at level 2 success rates improved from 67% to 82% and for level 3 from 79% to 83%. Level 1 success rates over four years have improved from 49% in 2002/03 to 86% in 2005/06. Progression between levels is good. On long courses for 16-18 and 19+ learners' achievement and retention rates have improved year-on-year to above national averages. Consistently improving success rates have been achieved over a period of significant growth in college enrolments. For example, full time equivalent recruitment for learners aged 16-18 has increased from 1607 in 2003/04 to 2469 in 2006/07.
- Value added as measured by the A level Performance Systems (ALPs) demonstrates significant improvement over a three year period. At GCE AS and A-level the college performance in 2006 was rated as outstanding and comparable to the top 10% in the ALPs cohort. Seventeen courses at both GCE AS-level and A-level were rated as outstanding or excellent in the 2006 value added data.

Quality of education and training

How responsive is the college to local needs?

- The college continues to be very responsive to local needs. The college is committed to addressing the needs of local adult learners. The percentage of learners over 19 is 33% compared with a national average in sixth form colleges of 7.3%. Pass and retention rates for

19+ learners remain significantly above national averages. Courses focus on the development of social skills and the employability of different groups of learners. The central focus remains on the key local needs of improving skills in literacy, numeracy and ESOL. All key indicators demonstrate that the college continues to provide outstanding provision for 19+ learners.

- The college continues to develop an extensive 14-16 programme working closely with the local 14-19 strategic partnership. Success rates for these courses are high with very good progression to further education. Provision is particularly strong in hairdressing, catering and the performing arts. The physics department has worked successfully on attracting more girls to GCE AS and A-level courses

How well has the college integrated the Every Child Matters (ECM) agenda into its provision?

- Excellent progress has been made in integrating the ECM agenda into the college's academic and support provision. The college has achieved healthy college status. Participation in sport and exercise is increasing. Staff training on ECM issues is comprehensive. An excellent pastoral system supports learners well. Target setting and monitoring are effective and learners classified as 'at risk' of not completing their courses or achieving receive outstanding support. Continuous year on year improvement in retention and pass rates enable learners to progress and enhance their economic well-being. There are a very extensive range of extra-curricular activities across curriculum areas that enhance learning and individual development. Learners are encouraged to make a positive contribution to the local community through a wide range of activities and events. There are over 1100 recipients of educational maintenance allowances (EMA). The ECM working groups ensure further integration of ECM principles in provision and effective monitoring of impact. The college also works in close partnership with three other Greater Manchester Sixth Form Colleges to further develop the ECM agenda. Evidence of documentation, events, professional development activities and discussions with staff indicate that the college's work on the ECM agenda is best practice provision which is impacting on the learners' experience significantly.

Leadership and management

How proactive is leadership and management in enabling continuous improvement?

- As noted above the college has demonstrated over four years exceptional improvement in success, achievement and retention rates at all levels. Continuous improvement is at the heart of quality assurance. Management has a highly self-critical approach. The recent completion of a £10 million building project has added outstanding performing arts accommodation, an excellent learning resource centre and very good student facilities to an already well managed estate. Quality assurance, data analysis and the monitoring of progress is outstanding.
- The college was awarded the LSC Beacon Award for Equality and Diversity in November 2006. The award reflects the college's success in promoting inclusive education, widening participation, and raising achievement and retention rates. The college has also established strong partnerships with other local FE colleges, the local 14-19 strategic partnership and local employers to address the challenging learning needs of Salford. This includes promoting social and employability skills, providing an outstanding ESOL provision, and working with those learners who are disengaged and/or disaffected. For example the college has worked productively with the probation services across Greater Manchester. This includes work with drug users, alcoholics and prostitutes to enable them to engage in education and improve their skills and life opportunities. The provision of basic skills to these groups through City & Guilds literacy and numeracy qualifications in 2006 achieved 100% pass rate. The college has worked with Salford Council and GMLSC to respond to local needs in raising the awareness of mental health issues across Salford. The project raises awareness of the complex issues that a learner could face and seeks ways of supporting the learner including work with external agencies. Productive links have been established with special educational needs co-ordinators (SENCO) in schools which has enhanced transition arrangements and course choices. The college's equality and diversity groups are very effective in communicating with a broad range of staff and taking appropriate opportunities to promote

disability equality across the college. Professional development in this aspect is excellent.

- The college has worked actively to contribute to the local Faith Communities and Further Education project. This project, which is LSC funded, has sought to enable opportunities for colleges to work in partnership with faith communities. The college has established a multi-faith chaplaincy service which now provides a range of activities for the moral and spiritual development of students.

How effective is self-assessment? Are improvements in curriculum grades robust and realistic?

- The college has a highly effective self-assessment process. There is a strong culture of continuous improvement. Data is used highly effectively to monitor and evaluate progress across a broad range of indicators.
- Four departments were visited and documentation scrutinised in order to evaluate their progress over the period 2002/03 to 2005/06. All four areas had moved from a grade 2 at the last inspection to a grade 1 in the most recent self-assessment. Art and Design offers a wide range of courses. Pass rates demonstrate strong improvement over three years. The percentage of learners achieving high grades has increased significantly. For example, in GCE A-level Fine Art higher grade achievement has improved from 13% in 2003/04 to 54% in 2005/06; in graphics from 0% in 2003/04 to 73% in 2005/06. Art work examined was of a high quality. Progression to related courses at higher education is impressive. The English department also demonstrates significant improvement over time. Pass rates are very high and consistently above benchmarks. The ratio of higher grades has increased from year-to-year. Learners make outstanding progress. The department has pioneered the use of Information and communication technology (ICT) within the college. An extensive range of ICT resources are available to challenge, engage and promote learning. Modern Foreign language has been successful in increasing enrolments from 55 in 2003/04 to 97 in 2006/07. Pass rates and progress at both GCE AS and A-level are outstanding. Learners are challenged through an extensive range of contacts with external agencies and visits so that they can better communicate in the language(s) they study. The success of performing arts has paralleled that of the college over the last three years. Pass rates and progress for learners are outstanding. Excellent enrichment opportunities

engage and challenge the learners. The department has expanded offering an extensive range of courses. The area has over four hundred learners and 12 staff members who are well qualified and have professional experience across a variety of areas in the performing arts. The area has acted as a catalyst of excellence for other departments throughout the college and in other institutions. Progression to related courses in higher education is outstanding. All four departments demonstrated strong quality assurance procedures and highly effective monitoring of learners' progress.

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:

- None