

ANNUAL ASSESSMENT VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Name of College: New College Nottingham
Date of visit: 12 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

How do headline success rates in 2005/06 compare to other similar colleges?

- The overall headline success rate in 2005/06 is close to the national average rate of similar colleges. The overall success rate at the college improved by 2% to 73% and is now 1% below the latest available (2004/05) national average. The overall long course success rate improved by 3% to 61% and this is also 1% below the latest available national average. The overall long course success rate for learners aged 16-18 improved significantly and is now 1% above the national average rate. However, the overall success rate on long courses for adult learners declined from 56% to 53% and remains below the national average rate.
- In sector subject areas, overall success rates on long courses improved in nine areas with significant improvements of over 10% in construction, education and in retail and commercial enterprise. Success rates in the majority of sector subject areas are at or close to the respective national average rates of 2004/05. However, in construction, engineering, leisure, travel and tourism and in the preparation for life and work sector subject areas overall success rates are well below national average levels with engineering success rates being very low indeed.

Have success rates on work-based learning programmes continued to improve?

- The overall success rate for full framework completion on work-based learning programmes continues to improve. However, the overall success rate remains significantly below the national average. In 2005/06 the overall success rate had improved to 41% and the national average was 49%. Advanced apprenticeship success rates are significantly below

average, whilst apprenticeships are slightly below national levels. Overall timely success rates have improved over the last three years and are now broadly in line with the national average rate.

- In construction, apprenticeship framework success rates increased significantly in 2005/06 to broadly satisfactory levels. In retail and commercial enterprises advanced apprenticeships declined slightly in 2005/06 to below average, whilst apprenticeship success rates remained above average. Within this, apprenticeship success rates in hospitality and catering have improved rapidly and are now good.
- College data for the current year continues to show an improvement in overall success rates although they remain below national average levels. The average length of stay for learners has decreased from 91 weeks in 2004/05 to 77 weeks in the current year.

What progress has been made in improving learners' attendance?

- The college continues to monitor learner attendance and makes effective use of its attendance and retention officers. At the time of the annual assessment visit the overall attendance rate was 82%. Data shows that learners aged 16-18 attend more frequently than adult learners. The current attendance rate for younger learners is 84% compared to the adults' attendance rate of 79%. The attendance rate has improved by 1% for learners aged 16-18 and remains unchanged for adult learners when compared to 2005/06 data. The college does not distinguish between those absences that are authorised and those that are not.

Quality of education and training

How effective is the monitoring of teaching and learning? Does it help to raise standards?

- Arrangements for the monitoring of teaching and learning are comprehensive. The lesson observation system is well managed and the information collected is well used to target staff development activity where it will have most effect. Thorough and detailed analysis of observation records provides a complete picture of performance at individual teacher, department and college level. Personal development reviews following observations ensure a close link between training needs and development activity. Staff training and development have a high

priority within the college and the staff development team is well regarded by staff.

- The grade profile of lessons observed during the period Sept 06 to April 07 identified 17% of lessons as outstanding, 52% as good, 28% satisfactory and 2% inadequate. This profile shows a reduction in the number of inadequate lessons observed when compared to the same period in the previous year but also shows a reduction in the number of good or better lessons observed. This is in part a reflection of the College targeting underperformance in terms of learner achievement and quality of teaching.

What action has been taken to promote the five themes of Every Child Matters (ECM) within the college?

- Good progress has been made in promoting the five themes of ECM since the last annual assessment visit. The college has worked hard to raise the profile of ECM across the college. Learners interviewed had a good understanding of the five themes. Appropriate policies and procedures have been devised and staff awareness training has been completed. Heads of school have produced detailed action plans which identify how the five themes are being implemented across their areas of responsibility. The current self-assessment report contains an assessment of performance against each of the five themes. Work continues to embed the college concept of 'every learner matters' into curriculum areas.
- The college has appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures in place. The designated child protection officer and others with a key role in working with vulnerable learners have undergone detailed safeguarding training and other staff have had appropriate training and awareness raising. However, governors have not yet received any training on child protection.

Are individual learning plans used effectively to aid learner progress?

- Good progress has been made in improving the quality and consistency of individual learning plans (ILPs) which are now used more effectively to aid learner progress. The college uses a common ILP template, appropriately adapted for use in different curriculum areas. Lead tutors audit a sample of ILPs and report on how well the documentation is used within each

area. Audit information is used effectively to target improvements. For example, the audit in November 2006 identified that only 36% of targets set in ILPs were sufficiently specific. In the audit of March 2007, following staff training in the interim period, 70% of ILPs audited had targets that were judged to be suitably specific. Learners interviewed commented that ILPs help them to monitor and manage their own progress.

What changes have been made to the provision for key skills and what impact have they had?

- Good progress has been made in developing key skills provision. The team of key skills teachers work more closely with curriculum areas to make key skills more vocationally relevant. However, despite the closer working relationship, not all learners appreciate the relevance of key skills to their studies. Vocational teachers have undergone some key skills training. The approach to the teaching of key skills varies within different curriculum areas and success rates vary considerably between different areas. On work-based learning programmes, key skills success rates in construction and catering are high but in hair and beauty and in retail they are low. Good practice has been identified and is being shared across the college. Outcomes for key skills show a continuing trend of improvement. Attendance at key skills lessons has improved steadily to 80% in the current year. College data shows that key skills success rates improved at all levels in 2005/06 and the overall success rate was 44%. Indications are that success rates will continue to rise in the current year.

Leadership and management

How effectively do managers access and use data to monitor performance and improve provision?

- Managers access to and use of data is much improved. Quality assurance procedures have been further refined and comprehensive school review meetings are very effective at holding managers to account for the performance of areas for which they are responsible. Managers at all levels have been trained in the use of management information software and they make good use of the system to monitor course performance and to plan improvements. Management reports are produced centrally and these enable managers and staff to access key performance

information such as attendance, retention and achievement information. Managers have a high awareness of the targets that are set and are focused on achieving them. The 'planning portal' is a particularly effective tool that identifies the financial contribution of courses and enables the planning of future curriculum development.

What progress has been made in addressing previously identified accommodation and resources issues?

- The college continues to make progress in addressing accommodation and resource issues. An appropriate programme of improvement and maintenance ensures that in most curriculum areas accommodation and resources continue to improve. Accommodation and resources on some sites are outstanding and provide excellent facilities for curriculum delivery. However, the college acknowledge that it has too much accommodation and that some of it is in a poor state and requires updating. Appropriate plans are in place to address many of the identified issues.

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:

- Good financial management and control has much improved the colleges' financial position. An operating surplus is forecast for the current year.