

## ANNUAL ASSESSMENT VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Name of College: Bournemouth and Poole College  
Date of visit: 5 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

Whilst most success rates in 2005/06 are at or above the national averages, success rates for some adult learners are low. What measures have been put in place to correct this weakness?

- Since the inspection of January 2007, appropriate analysis of the success rates for some adult learners has been carried out by the college. Weaknesses regarding the relevance of some information communication technology (ICT) courses have been identified and decisive action has been taken to address these. Some ICT provision on the Landsdowne site has been withdrawn during the year.

In 2005/06 there was a significant improvement in most key skills success rates, although the number of entries was lower. Has the college continued this improvement, whilst ensuring that all learners needing to develop and accredit their key skills do so?

- Provisional 2006/07 data supplied by the college indicates that effective action has been taken to improve key skills take-up and success rates. Numbers submitting key skills portfolios have increased by some 34 per cent between 2005/06 and 2006/07 to date. The college anticipates that the 44 per cent success rate of 2005/06 will be improved upon in 2006/07.

In 2005/06 some AS-level results were poor. How is the college addressing this?

- The college has taken a suitable range of measures to improve its AS achievement rates. Entry criteria for AS courses have been tightened, with a greater emphasis on learners' prior attainment. Low attendance and poor punctuality have been particularly targeted. Punctuality has improved. There is now a more stringent assessment of learners' on-course predicted grades prior to

them being entered for the examinations. It is too early to judge the full impact of these strategies.

## Quality of education and training

As part of the post-inspection action plan, a review has been carried out into the impact of advanced practitioners on teaching and learning, and a whole college exercise is in progress targeted at 'making teaching and learning even better'. What are the outcomes to date?

- A well-considered and broad-ranging strategy is in place to improve teaching and learning. Advanced practitioners work across departments, effectively developing learning materials. Senior managers are leading 'solutions groups' with staff to develop recommendations for improvement. Staff continue to develop useful materials and assignments on the virtual learning environment. Departmental senior managers are noting significant improvements to retention rates and improvements in the effectiveness of assessment procedures.

What are the outcomes of teaching and learning observations conducted during 2006/07, and particularly since the last inspection? How have these informed staff support and development?

- The college has strengthened its arrangements for the observation of teaching and learning. Grading is more rigorous and realistic. The level of moderation and scrutiny has improved through the introduction of paired observations. The college has introduced 'raising the grade' workshops for all teachers to improve performance from satisfactory to good or better. Managers have introduced a range of appropriate strategies to share good practice within their staff teams

The college is currently planning major re-development of two of its campuses, beginning in 2007. How is the college planning to minimise the impact on current learners whilst the work is undertaken?

- The college is well advanced in initial planning to rationalise and extensively re-develop its accommodation, with the development likely to cost in excess of £100 million. Proposals will be put to the LSC by December 2007 with final costings agreed by November 2008. Agreement is being sought for first phase preparatory work to begin in the summer of 2008. Most of the North Road campus will be demolished and re-developed, and extensive changes are planned for the Lansdowne campus. The college is well aware of the potential disruption to learning that this development may cause and is planning to

minimise the difficulties. Future annual assessment visits need to consider the impact of this work.

## Leadership and management

What progress has been made to date in addressing the weaknesses identified during the January 2007 inspection?

- In the short time since the full inspection, good progress has been made. The post-inspection action plan is well conceived and provides a coherent plan based on the inspection report and on the wider developmental needs of the college. 'Solution groups' have been formed to consider factors such as support for work experience and the development of key skills. Agreed improvements are scheduled to be introduced from September 2007. The college is developing criteria to introduce 'light touch' monitoring of well performing curriculum areas, allowing greater focus on curriculum areas of concern.

The need for improvement in the use of data in target-setting is recognised in the inspection report, and in the action plan. What progress has been made in setting more realistic and challenging targets?

- Appropriate planning has taken place since the last inspection to provide better target-setting and monitoring. Existing course and academy review and self assessment arrangements will now be better integrated with the college's business planning. Central to the process is a clear commitment to the validity of centrally held data. It is too early to judge the value of the new model, but it provides the capacity to better inform review and planning throughout the college.

The last report notes that the college is 'highly responsive' to the views of learners' representatives. Is this strength being maintained, and what examples are there of learners' involvement in the development of the college?

- The college continues to use a range of suitable strategies to gain feedback from learners, including the regular student forum meetings held within departments. The group of learners interviewed during the visit were positive about their courses and enjoyed their studies. However, too many of these learners cited aspects of course organisation that they were not satisfied with and some felt that issues they had raised with staff were not dealt with effectively. The role and recruitment of learner representatives vary significantly between courses.

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:

- During the visit the college provided information on the development of its virtual learning environment (VLE). There are notable examples where work undertaken as part of nationally funded projects has received wide recognition. In the last year a well conceived monitoring of staff and learner use of the VLE has been put in place. Implementation has particularly improved in, for instance, the management and leadership academy, with 66 per cent of students using the VLE. However other areas are far less developed and the college recognises that significant further work is needed to ensure that the VLE is a central tool of learning across the college.