

ANNUAL ASSESSMENT VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Name of College: Bournville College
Date of visit: 11 January 2007

This feedback contains brief findings from the annual assessment visit (AAV). 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 do learners achieve?

- The overall college success rate improved by only 0.2% between 2002/03 and 2004/05, compared with an increase in the national average of 7.9% over the same period. In 2004/05 the college success rate was 67%, significantly below the national average of 72%. However, the college success rate improved by 7% in 2005/06 to 74%.
- The success rate for students aged 16 to 18 in 2004/05 was 59%, which was significantly below the national average of 66%. However, this rate improved by 9% in 2005/06 to 68%. Success rates for 16 to 18 year olds on long courses in 2004/05 were similar to the national average at level 1, but significantly below the national averages at levels 2 and 3. Success rates on these courses improved in 2005/06 by 10%, 11% and 9% at levels 1, 2 and 3 respectively.
- The overall success rate for adults in 2004/05 was 69% which was significantly below the national average of 74%. However, this improved by 6% in 2005/06 to 75%. Success rates for adults on long courses in 2004/05 were significantly above the national average at level 1 and similar to the national averages at levels 2 and 3. Success rates on these courses improved in 2005/06 by 6% at level 1 and 10% at levels 2 and 3.
- Value-added and distance travelled indicators published by the LSC suggest that most learners achieve in line with expectations based on their prior attainment. This is also true of the advanced level information system (ALIS) data for AS and A2 learners, although it should be noted that ALIS performance has improved markedly in the last three years.
- Work-based learning data indicate that overall success rates for apprenticeships have improved in recent years. However in 2005/06 the overall success rate was below the national average. Timely success rates for apprenticeships have also improved, but are still below the national average.

Quality of education and training

What actions has the college taken to improve the quality of teaching and learning? What has been the impact of these actions?

- The college has undertaken a number of actions to improve the quality of teaching and learning, and evidence suggests that notable improvements were achieved in 2005/06.
- All teachers are observed annually by a subject specialist colleague as part of a three-week, faculty-wide teaching observation process. Observation records are detailed and evaluative. The faculty team and an external consultant moderate all observation judgements and grades. Individual action plans provide clear guidance on how to improve practice. Advanced practitioners provide effective mentoring support for staff identified as needing additional help to achieve their individual improvement targets. Faculty managers also monitor progress against action plans as part of their line management responsibilities and the annual appraisal system.
- In addition to faculty-based observations, the college quality team completes a formal internal inspection of each subject sector area every three years that includes observations of teaching and learning. The resulting report contains judgements about the quality of teaching and learning and any actions for improvement.
- The grades awarded during internal observations of teaching and learning improved in 2005/06. The proportion of lessons judged to be outstanding increased by 6% compared to 2004/05 and those judged to be good increased by 21%. The college has also been successful in reducing the proportion of unsatisfactory lesson grades. The college has targeted an increase in the proportion of outstanding lessons as an area for further improvement.

Is continuing professional development well planned? Does it have a significant impact on the quality of teaching and learning, particularly in helping to eliminating unsatisfactory teaching?

- Staff development is well planned and inclusive. College business plans inform the annual professional development plan, as do quality assurance practices such as self-assessment and observations of teaching and learning. Training events organised by the college include four full-days each year attended by all staff, together with regular additional training opportunities and bespoke sessions requested by staff teams. Annual calendars, quarterly teaching and learning bulletins, and the staff intranet effectively promote the training made available.

- Much emphasis has been placed on using professional development to address unsatisfactory teaching. All teachers without a teaching qualification have a personal action plan to achieve qualified teacher status within two years of gaining employment at the college. The staff intranet includes a range of guidance documents to inform and improve teaching practice. Detailed action plans are produced as a result of internal observations of teaching and learning, and any teacher whose lesson was judged to be inadequate is re-observed within a defined period. The college has been successful in reducing the proportion of unsatisfactory grades awarded to lessons during internal observations from 14% in 2004/05 to 4% in 2005/06.
- The college has improved the information and learning technology (ILT) available to staff and there is increasing use of ILT to support learning. All teaching rooms now have network connections, 52 rooms have interactive whiteboards and five mobile boards are also available. A new e-learning technology post has been created to support and train staff in using the college's virtual learning environment.

What have been the key improvements relating to inclusion since the last inspection? How successful are the measures to increase participation by socially disadvantaged groups?

- The college has extended the programmes and partnerships that effectively engage learners from under-represented and disadvantaged groups. Since the last inspection the number of increased flexibility programmes has increased and these have been extended to include pupils excluded from schools and those at risk of exclusion.
- Community programmes provide individualised training for young offenders and unemployed adults. Partnership working with community groups, further education colleges and training providers to engage unemployed car workers in training and/or employment has been particularly successful. Funding has been extended to continue this partnership work and to widen the offer to all unemployed people in the area. The college information, guidance and support team visits all community projects to inform learners of the resources and support available to them.
- Programmes are provided in collaboration with Birmingham Mental Health Trust. The college has appointed a member of staff to take responsibility for guiding learners with mental health problems or learning difficulties onto the most appropriate qualifications.
- The college has a high proportion of learners from minority ethnic groups. They represent over one-third of learners compared to just under 10% of

the local population. Success rates of learners from most minority ethnic groups are equal to or higher those of the college as a whole.

Leadership and management

How have the self-assessment process and development planning been improved? What has been the impact of any improvements?

- The college has recognised the need to regularly review and improve its self-assessment process and has put in place several measures to improve its rigour, accuracy and consistency.
- Course self-assessment is informed by data from the college information system (CIS), lesson observations, learner feedback and reviews of the quality of provision that take place during course team meetings. Self assessment has been improved by reviewing the quality assurance activities that contribute to the process and by making better use of performance data. There is an increasing emphasis on the current performance of courses rather than reviewing the quality of provision in the past.
- Self assessment is also informed by a three-year cycle of internal inspections. These include the review of a wide range of evidence and a check on compliance with college quality assurance procedures. The reports produced are submitted to the college's quality improvement board (QIB) and the corporation. Actions for improvement are carefully monitored.
- Course self-assessment reports (SARs) are validated by programme area managers and heads of faculty. The reports are then aggregated by programme area and subjected to further validation. This process included the use of external moderators for the first time in 2005/06.
- Course and programme SARs for 2005/06 are comprehensive but contain too much unnecessary detail. The format of these reports has been changed for 2006/07 to focus more clearly on key judgements and associated actions for improvement. Development plans are clear and appropriately detailed, although some of the targets for improvement in the college development plan could be more quantitative.
- Programme area SARs and the whole college SAR are validated by the QIB before finally being submitted to the corporation for further review and ratification.

What actions has the college taken to improve the use of data for quality improvement?

- The college implemented a new CIS in 2004/05 and this has subsequently contributed to good improvements in the accuracy, timeliness and use of data for quality improvement. CIS improvements have been accompanied by a range of training events to help staff access and use the available data. This training was initially focused on senior managers but has since been extended to many other staff and further training is taking place in the current academic year.
- In addition to supporting staff in using the available data, the CIS team produce monthly exception reports to help managers monitor the quality of provision. An annual cycle of reports published from the CIS are used effectively by middle and senior managers as part of the ongoing self-assessment process. An increasing proportion of staff are making good use of data for decision making and quality improvement at course, programme area and whole college levels.
- The college has identified the need for further training and support to help staff in all areas make good use of CIS data and to make better use of data relating to value-added indicators and the distance travelled by learners. The CIS system is starting to be used more effectively to monitor learners at risk of not completing their courses so that remedial action can be undertaken.

