

ANNUAL ASSESSMENT VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Name of College: David Lewis College
Date of visit: 25 September 2006

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

The setting of targets was an area for development at the last annual assessment visit (AAV). How effectively has the college addressed this area?

- The process of target setting is much improved since the last AAV. Baseline assessments, especially for new learners have been significantly strengthened. Inspectors noted that the outcomes of assessment are used more effectively to determine the starting point for the setting of goals and targets. There have been considerable training opportunities provided for staff with regard to target setting. The college has also introduced focussed lesson observations with developmental feedback and support given to staff from individual co-ordinators.

How effective have been the interventions to strengthen and develop assessment process and link these to learners targets?

- As a result of more sharply focussed goals and targets students achievements have been improved. There is a more consistent approach to the processes of assessment, for example, a standard template and accompanying booklet is used for initial assessment. For those learners with more complex needs baseline assessment has been appropriately extended to 12 weeks and is matched against Performance (P) scales to provide consistency of information. Individual learning plans are more comprehensive.

What progress has been made with the implementation of the Recognising and Recording Progress and Achievement (RARPA) framework?

- Work is well under way with regard to RARPA. The college estimates that it now has increased confidence in implementing stages one to three of RARPA. There has been much staff training and staff are now setting more realistic goals and targets that are both subject and functionally specific. Further training is planned for stages four and five.

Quality of education and training

What progress has the college made with enabling teaching staff to better manage the learning support staff?

- Progress reports indicate that, as a result of a variety of interventions, there has been a steady increase in the proportion of lessons which are good or better to 52% and of satisfactory and above to 90%. Themed lesson observations have focussed on the role and management of learning support staff. Continued unsatisfactory performances are successfully addressed. Outcomes of lesson observations are linked to performance management and staff report that the developmental feedback is helpful in enabling them to improve their practice.

How successful has been the development of the provision for learners with additional and complex needs? What additional training has been made available for staff?

- This project, for a group of learners with severe epilepsy, autism and severe learning disabilities, was set up in response to local, regional and national priorities. It has now completed its first pilot year and learner numbers have increased to five. Significant planning and staff development have taken place and the co-ordinator of this development has done much to support and promote its success. The recording of these learners progress is detailed.
- This provision is, however, separate from the main college and is currently based within 'Cherry Trees' residential setting. This accommodation is not fit for purpose. The teaching room is too small and the sensory room is cramped. There are plans in place to put a large temporary cabin on a plot of land opposite Cherry Trees in January 2007. Whilst there are opportunities for these learners to access the main college site the proposed accommodation will remain separate. Although the progress report states that this provision employs an integrated living and learning approach inspectors judged that some aspects of the provision were insufficiently adult focussed and did not provide adequate challenge.

Leadership and management

Has the college maintained its rigorous self-assessment process? Is it used effectively to bring about the required improvements?

- Staff report that they are fully involved in the self-assessment cycle. A process of internal and external validation is being introduced this year. Inspectors agree with the college that audit evaluation and monitoring is now much more systematic and effective but that further development, especially with regard to

consistency, would be helpful. However, overall the quality cycle is rigorous and effective in bringing about further improvements.

How well has the college responded to the recent DfES guidelines on safe recruitment practices and safeguarding? How well has the college put plans in place to meet its duties under the Disability Equality Scheme (DES)?

- Scrutiny of the centre's human resources database indicates that all college staff are appropriately checked and vetted. Work is well under way to draw together all of the information on safe recruitment practices and safeguarding, as DfES required by guidelines.
- Good attention is given to risk assessments and these are documented, especially for work experience and external visits. The SAR progress report identifies that there is a need to further develop the risk assessment processes and to streamline reporting systems for accidents, behaviour incidents and seizures.
- Whilst documentation and discussions with staff and managers indicate that the college is fully committed to the principles of inclusion further work is required to ensure full compliance with the DES.