

MONITORING VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Name of college: Greenwich Community College

Date of visit: 22 November 2007

Context

The College is a large general college of further education. It has six main centres and a further 35 satellite venues, including shared premises at Charlton Athletic Football Club with Greenwich Leisure Limited (GLL). The "London Leisure College" is an award winning partnership between GLL and the college, designed to meet the skills needs of employers in the leisure and sports industries both in Greenwich and across London. The college employs around 800 staff who deliver over 2,500 courses to approximately 20,000 learners, including Adult and Community Learning provision on behalf of the Borough of Greenwich. The college is a member of the G+ network of post 16 providers in the Borough. The college was last inspected in April 2006, when overall effectiveness was judged to be satisfactory, as were achievements and standards and the quality of provision. Leadership and management and the capacity to improve were graded as good. Five curriculum areas were graded as satisfactory and one was judged to be good.

Achievement and standards

What progress has the college made to improve learners' outcomes generally, and specifically to further improvements in success rates for 16 to 18 year olds, for adults at level 2 and on short courses?	Reasonable progress
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Current data for students' achievements in 2006/07 are still provisional. They are incomplete for many curriculum areas, particularly where NVQ qualifications are taken. For this reason, it is not possible to evaluate the outcomes for learners on short courses and other areas where a large number of results are not yet finalised, such as the level 2 provision for adults.

Curriculum areas where success rate data are mainly complete, such as GCSE and GCE AS and A levels, indicate a general trend of improvement. This is particularly the case for learners aged 16 to 18 at level 3 where success rates are significantly above the national average for similar colleges. However, even when a full set of results are available, it is likely that success rates for level 1 learners of all ages will continue to be below the national averages.

Retention rates for 2006/07 are largely complete. They show a decrease at level 1 for adult learners and continue to be below the national average for all ages at this level. Retention rates have improved and are around the national average for learners aged 16 to 18 at level 2 and above the national average for adults on level 3 programmes.

The college evaluates all students' achievement data fully. For example, a college analysis indicates that learners receiving additional learning support (ALS) have higher success rates than learners not receiving ALS. Similarly, success rates are higher for those receiving learners' support funding, childcare support and the educational maintenance allowance (EMA).

Quality of provision

Has the college made sufficient progress in developing a rigorous lesson observation scheme that can lead to greater variety in teaching to meet the needs of all learners?	Significant progress
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According to the college's scheme of lesson observation, teaching and learning improved significantly in 2006/07. The percentage of lessons graded good or better rose from 53% to 68%. The college has a clear view of the aspects of teaching that require further improvement.

Since the annual assessment visit (AAV) of November 2006, significant progress has been made in developing further the rigour of the lesson observation scheme. The scheme is comprehensive, extending to all teachers, and rigorously applied. It is closely and sensibly integrated with the college's wide range of quality improvement arrangements. For example, it is closely linked with the support, supervision and performance appraisal scheme for teachers, being regarded as central to the review of their performance. A defined annual sequence of quality improvement activities, including course

review, and management activities, ensure that outcomes from observation are considered in the overall review and planning for quality improvement. Joint work with two other colleges has improved the arrangements for the moderation of judgements and grades.

Improvements in the rigour of the lesson observation scheme are particularly evident in the way that the college plans actions, and monitors the progress of teachers whose observations were graded satisfactory or inadequate. The previous AAV noted that there was no specific action plan agreed with teachers to help monitor progress, but action planning for improvement is now good. The college has detailed records of the support that teachers receive to help improve their teaching and of the outcomes for teachers.

More broadly, teachers are helped to improve their teaching by the provision of well chosen staff development, both individual and group, and the innovative coaching scheme.

Are individual learner targets being set and monitored that challenge and promote improvement?	Reasonable progress
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The previous inspection reported that tutorials are used well to provide pastoral support, but the use of individual learning plans was underdeveloped and target-setting was weak. The college acknowledges in its draft self assessment report that this is still an issue in some curriculum areas where action planning is not always used effectively to raise achievement. The college is undertaking a large-scale project this year, for around 1,000 learners, with individual learning plans being completed on-line by learners, teachers and tutors.

All full-time learners are set target grades and these are reviewed regularly. In some cases these targets are raised to provide a more aspirational target for the learner, based on their current progress. Part-time learners also have targets that are reviewed. During the monitoring visit, students were very positive about the support they receive for their learning from the target-setting process. Additional motivational sessions and visits are in place to raise the expectations of learners. The student services team are focussing on providing individual career guidance interviews to further support learners.

Leadership and management

Has the college established greater consistency in quality monitoring procedures at course level?	Significant progress
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Much of the college's work on quality improvement over the last year has focused on achieving greater consistency of quality monitoring at course level. Significant progress has been made. The consistency and rigour in the application of a wide range of quality improvement measures has improved.

Course reviews are at the centre of this activity. The outcomes from the annual cycle of review of performance are an essential element in building the self-assessment report. The rigour of course review has improved as teachers and curriculum managers use routinely the increasingly reliable data available to them. The wider implementation of course reviews has been helped by the introduction of the 'mini course quality record' system, designed for smaller scale provision, with reduced paperwork.

Consistency in quality monitoring has also been helped by more thorough standardisation of internal verification.

The sequence of course review is thoroughly managed and audited, through the course quality record process. There is training to help teachers understand the process and to explain its importance to quality improvement.