

MONITORING VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Name of college: Redcar and Cleveland College

Date of visit: 23 October 2007

Context

Redcar and Cleveland College is a tertiary college based in the seaside town of Redcar in the borough of Redcar and Cleveland. The college is one of the two main providers of post-16 education located in the borough. The other is a sixth form college located 7 miles away in Guisborough. At the last inspection of the college, in November 2004, leadership and management were judged to be satisfactory; support and guidance for students and educational and social inclusion were judged to be good. Of the nine curriculum areas inspected two were judged to be good (grade 2), six were satisfactory (grade 3) and one was judged to be unsatisfactory (grade 4). The unsatisfactory area was re-inspected in October 2006 and was judged to be satisfactory (grade 3).

Achievement and standards

What progress has the college made in improving headline success rates on long courses for learners aged 16 to 18 and for those aged 19+?	Reasonable progress
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Achievement data for 2006/07 provided by the college during the monitoring visit suggests that actions taken to improve success rates have been effective on long courses at level 1 and 2, but have not had sufficient impact at level 3.

Success rates on long level 1 courses for learners aged 16 to 18 and for those aged 19+ have improved over the last three years to around the 2005/06 national averages for similar colleges. The rate on long level 2 courses for learners aged 16 to 18 has improved slowly over the last three years to around the 2005/06 national average for similar colleges. For learners aged 19+ although the rate improved by 12%, it remains significantly below the 2005/06 national average.

On long level 3 courses for learners aged 16 to 18 the success rate has not improved over the last three years and is significantly below the national average. The rate for learners aged 19+ improved by 13%, but remains below the national average.

What progress has the college made in improving retention and achievement in work-based learning?	Reasonable progress
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The college is implementing a range of actions which have been successful in improving achievement in work-based learning. In 2005/06, achievement across all apprenticeships increased by 18% to 60% which is around the national average. Unvalidated data provided by the college during the monitoring visit suggests that the rate, at 66%, is continuing to improve. In Train to Gain achievement is satisfactory and improving. Progressions for Entry to Employment at 52% are satisfactory. Teachers and managers have clear targets to continue to improve performance and management information is now used more effectively to monitor progress at course level. However, learners are not involved sufficiently in reviewing the quality of their courses. The arrangements for monitoring learners' performance have improved through the introduction of a traffic lighting system which highlights those at risk. Most learners are aware of the progress they are making and are keen to achieve. However, the college procedures for setting learners targets for achievement and to monitor their progress are applied inconsistently.

Quality of provision

At the time of the last AAV the college was implementing a range of actions to improve the quality of teaching and learning. How effective have these actions been?	Reasonable progress
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The new observation system being introduced at the time of the last monitoring visit is now into its second cycle. The team of observers have been provided with appropriate training to carry out the role and a process to standardise grades awarded and to help to ensure consistency is in place. At the end of this cycle the college should have the data and qualitative information to be able to track and report on improvements.

However, the reports from observations carried out during 2006/07 place too much emphasis on describing what the teacher does, rather than its impact on learning. Some provide insufficient guidance to the teacher on how to improve.

The team of 11 teaching and learning practitioners are becoming more established in their roles. They provide mentoring and support to teachers who have been given an unsatisfactory grade through the college's observation process. However the system is not mandatory and arrangements to re-observe teachers whose performance is judged to be unsatisfactory are not clearly defined. The college has identified these issues and the processes are being reviewed by the recently appointed quality improvement manager.

Arrangements to share good practice in teaching and learning are improving. Regular internal staff development events are focussed on improving the quality of teaching and teachers are able to visit other colleges to share practice.

Leadership and management

At the last inspection course reviews were insufficiently rigorous. What progress has the college made in addressing this area for improvement?	Reasonable progress
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A new and more rigorous process for carrying out course reviews was introduced at the end of the 2005/06 academic year. This process, now in its second year, effectively involves course teams in reviewing the performance of their programmes against all aspects of the common inspection framework. The process is informed by increasingly accurate data on retention and pass rates, student feedback and EV reports. Course reports are now monitored more rigorously at all levels of the college. Levels of accountability at course level have increased.

At the last inspection arrangements for quality assurance had not been reviewed or strengthened since the previous inspection. What progress has the college made in addressing this issue?	Reasonable progress
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Over the last two years arrangements for quality assurance and self-assessment have been thoroughly reviewed. A new management structure has been introduced which has successfully increased levels of accountability. The roles and responsibilities of staff are now much clearer. Communication is good, staff report that senior and other managers are approachable and supportive. The management of work-based learning has continued to strengthen and has a high priority.

The monitoring and review of the curriculum is now carried out three times a year. This process is linked well to the achievement of the college's strategic objectives. Senior managers, including the principal, monitor the performance of the college at course level against a variety of key performance indicators. Management information to support the review process is more widely available and increasingly accurate. Under-performing areas are now identified earlier through a traffic lighting system and prompt action is taken to help to improve standards. Internal and external validation panels are used to challenge and moderate the outcomes of the course review and self-assessment processes. The college is a member of a group of similar organisations for peer review purposes.

What progress has the college made in implementing its accommodation strategy?	Significant progress
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The college has made significant progress in the implementation of its ambitious accommodation strategy. A £26 million capital re-build is planned for completion in the autumn of 2008. This will provide state-of-the-art accommodation for all aspects of college provision located on one site. The new facilities will include large areas for construction, engineering, hair and beauty and sport. Staff have been consulted throughout the development process and are positive about the potential of the new facilities.