

## MONITORING VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Name of college: City of Bath College

Date of visit: 24 April 2008

### Context

City of Bath College is a medium-sized general further education college located in the city centre. Bath is an affluent area generally but three wards are above the English national average for multiple deprivation. The area has a low proportion of minority ethnic inhabitants, at 4%. The college's minority ethnic population is just over 5%. The proportion of school leavers with 5 or more GCSEs at grades A\*-C is higher than the national average. In 2006/07, the college recruited 1,678 students aged 16 to 18 and 4,132 adult students. Of these, around 2,700 were full-time students. Some 200 school students aged 14 to 16 attend courses at the college.

At the previous inspection in April 2007, overall effectiveness, capacity to improve, achievement and standards, quality of provision and leadership and management and equality of opportunity were graded 3. Guidance and support and educational and social inclusion were also satisfactory. One curriculum area was graded 1, two were graded 2 and three were graded 3.

### Achievement and standards

How much progress has the college made in raising success rates in 2006/07?	No discernible progress
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College success rates did not improve in 2006/07 and are low. The overall success rate, at 70%, remained 6% below the national average for 2005/06. The success rate for long courses stayed at 61% which is 6% below the national average for 2005/06. The long success rate improved by 2% for students aged 16-18 but it was still 4% below the national average for 2005/06. Success rates in key skills are very low. Success rates for students aged 14-16 are good. The college identified that incorrect success rate benchmark data was used in the self-assessment report.

What progress has been made in improving the rate of progress for learners on work-based learning programmes?	Insufficient progress
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Framework completion rates for the small number of advanced apprentices improved from 33% to 50% in 2006/07 and timely completion rates improved to 5% above the national average. Completion rates for apprentices declined from 57% in 2005/06 to 43% in 2006/07. The college identified that it had not recorded achievement data for some apprentices. Taking this into account, the overall completion rate for all apprentices was still below the national average in 2006/07.

### Quality of provision

How much progress has the college made in raising the quality of teaching and learning?	Reasonable progress
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Since the previous inspection the college has made reasonable progress in raising the quality of teaching and learning. The college has implemented improved arrangements for the observation of teaching and learning, the moderation of findings and for the coaching of teachers requiring developmental support. The college has established the principle that satisfactory teaching is not good enough and views such teaching as marginal performance. The college has, therefore, concentrated closely on raising the quality of teaching of those staff who received a satisfactory grade or less in the previous year, those new to the college and those who had not been previously observed. It has identified common areas for improvement from its observation of lessons. Analysis of the current teaching and learning grades shows that a high proportion of teachers who received a satisfactory grade in 2006/07 were awarded a higher grade in 2007/08. About 10% received the same grade and a small number were awarded a lower grade. Overall the college profile shows an increase in the proportion of good or better grades, a decline in the proportion of satisfactory grades and the same low proportion of inadequate grades. Clear procedures are in place to deal with continual underperformance.

The college has improved the moderation of teaching and learning grades and has conducted joint lesson observations and moderation activities using external practitioners. It has identified clearly the characteristics of each lesson grade. About a third of lesson observations have been moderated for 2007/08 with a minority of grades changed. The college acknowledges that it now needs to concentrate further on sharing best practice and to organise more peer observations. With regards to full-time teachers, the college has not yet met its LSC targets in terms of establishing a qualified workforce. Some 75% of staff have or are working towards a teaching qualification compared with a target of 95%. The college has experienced a higher than average turnover of staff over the last two years. The college is slightly below the LSC teaching qualification target for part-time teachers.

How much progress has the college made in developing the curriculum, particularly at levels 1 and 2?	Reasonable progress
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Since the previous inspection the college has made reasonable progress in developing and expanding its curriculum. It is, however, too early to judge the full impact of these developments in their first year. It has devised a clear strategy to concentrate more on the development of skills to respond fully to the 14-19 agenda and the needs of local employers. It has successfully established a new full-time level 1 course, Pathways to Employment and Training PET, certificated by an introductory diploma in vocational studies, that develops students' social, personal, language, literacy and numeracy skills while enabling them to sample and then take courses in construction and engineering skills, health and care, hairdressing, sport, floristry and catering. Seventy students have enrolled on this course. The college has provided useful staff development for teachers new to teaching at this level, validated by a university.

The college has 20 Entry to Employment (E2E) students and 12 pre E2E students. A further 83 students have enrolled on new provision at level 1 including catering, plumbing and construction. The college has also extended some of its provision at level 2 and now includes hairdressing, plumbing and electrical. The college has reviewed most of its level 3 provision, especially GCE A levels. It has started a new BTEC national diploma in business and withdrawn its level 3 provision in business administration, concentrating instead on the level 2 provision.

Clear plans exist to develop the curriculum further through pre-apprenticeship and young apprenticeship programmes and expansion at level 4 to include two foundation degrees in music production and heritage management. As part of the Bath and North East Somerset 14-19 partnership the college will deliver two diplomas in 2009/10 at levels 1 to 3 in media and construction.

How much progress has the college made in improving the consistency of tutorial arrangements and target-setting to monitor progress?	Reasonable progress
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Since the previous inspection the college has reviewed its tutorial arrangements and implemented clearer procedures and standard documentation for tutorials and the production of personal development plans (PDP). It is, however, too early to evaluate the full impact of this development. The college has established the post of lead tutor in each department whose role is to report on the quality of tutorials and PDPs at departmental meetings and to the client services director. Recent college-wide reviews suggest that the quality of tutorials and the setting and monitoring of targets has improved. The college has produced a standard scheme of work for group tutorials that contains clear links to the five outcomes of Every Child Matters

and is supported by useful on-line learning materials. Tutors have received training on the setting of targets and although target-setting has improved, the college acknowledges that further improvements are needed. Tutors have received training on delivering elements of the group tutorial. Where tutors lack specific expertise, the college has established arrangements with health professionals to provide support. The college has improved the frequency of work-based learning progress reviews and most apprentices now have reviews on a six-weekly basis. However, some apprentices still await a progress review. The college acknowledges that it needs to widen pastoral support to its apprentices.

How much progress has been made in improving accommodation and access to information learning technology (ILT) resources in lessons?	Significant progress
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The college has taken very effective action to tackle many of the accommodation issues identified at the previous inspection. Electrical, mechanical and air conditioning workshops have been refurbished. Beauty salons and the hospitality area have been updated, though more is yet to be done. The fitness suite has been upgraded with new equipment. There is a new students' common room with good quality furnishings and a new, attractive careers advice area adjacent to the common room. Improved student welfare facilities are provided at the construction site including an extended catering service offering healthy food options. Students in plumbing and beauty therapy complain of a shortage of equipment.

Significant improvements have been made to the availability of ILT resources in lessons. New equipment has been provided including 13 interactive whiteboards, 83 new data projectors, 60 laptop computers, 136 computers to be used in blended learning, 172 computers for staff use, video cameras, scanners and digital cameras. An ILT skills audit has been completed by all staff. The college has a team of trainers and developers and approximately three quarters of staff have received training so far. Students commented favourably on the regular use of ILT in lessons.

#### Leadership and management

How much progress has the college made in developing and implementing a strategic approach to employer engagement?	Reasonable progress
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A director of services to business and a relationships manager have been appointed in recent months to improve the college's focus and engagement with business. College strategy for employer engagement has now been developed. The college is now fully engaged with a number of employer organisations such as the Chamber of Commerce. New employers are starting to use the college services and progress against the Train to Gain contract is promising. Plans are in place for a joint venture

with other colleges to provide services to business. The air conditioning and refrigeration, health, and early years curriculum areas have very productive links with employers. Contact with employers is variable across other curriculum areas of the college and there are few active employer forums. A central database of employers is yet to be developed. The college is starting to collect and evaluate data on employer participation rates and satisfaction rates.