

# Redbridge College

## Reinspection report

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## Introduction

Redbridge College was inspected in January 2007. Inspectors carried out the inspection under Section 62 of the Learning and Skills Act. The quality of provision was found to be satisfactory or better in all areas inspected, except in health and care, and business and administration, which were found to be inadequate. Ofsted is responsible for re-inspecting all provision that is inadequate.

The less than satisfactory curriculum areas were re-inspected on 3–4 June 2008. The outcomes of the reinspection are as follows:

Curriculum aspect	Original grade	Reinspection grade
Health and care	4	3
Business and administration	4	2

## Health and care

### Context

The college offers full-time programmes at levels 1 to 3 to 136 learners, largely aged 16-18. Most learners follow level 3 programmes with equal numbers attending childcare and health and social care. The college also provides an access to nursing and health programme, substantial distance learning provision, including Train to Gain, and is developing links with several schools for learners aged 14-16.

### Strengths

- Good in-year retention in 2007/08
- Substantial achievement of higher grades in 2007/08
- Good progression to higher education and employment from level 3 care, and access to nursing and health courses
- Good management of improvement

### Areas for improvement

- Success rates on the first diploma in health and social care and on childcare courses in 2006/07
- Strategies to extend more able learners in lessons
- Employer engagement
- Identification and sharing of best practice

## Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards are satisfactory. The college has done much to successfully tackle the low success rates of 2006/07, including those on the first

diploma in health and social care and on childcare courses. In-year retention has improved significantly in 2007/08, to at or above national comparators. Current learners are on target to achieve their course aims, often with higher grades, including on those courses with previously low success rates. Learners are confident and now enjoy their studies. Good use is made of their life and work experiences to inform and enhance learning. Progression from level 3 care and access to nursing and health courses to higher education or relevant employment is good.

## Quality of provision

The quality of provision and of teaching and learning are satisfactory. In better lessons, teachers plan a range of activities to promote and check individual learning well. In less effective lessons, teachers pose open questions to the group, failing to adequately check or extend learning. Strategies to extend more able learners are under-developed. Good use is made of learners' work and personal experiences. Learners are encouraged to work independently or as members of a team to solve problems within a defined timescale. Support for learners is good. A satisfactory range of courses is provided.

Accommodation is satisfactory and includes a designated room for childcare. Learners are encouraged to research widely using several sources, including the internet. Learners make good use of the college's virtual learning environment.

## Leadership and management

Leadership and management are good. Recent staff changes have led to a thorough review of provision. A clear vision for improvement is understood and owned by all and is being successfully implemented. Satisfactory progress has been made to address identified areas for improvement, particularly implementing improved quality assurance procedures. Work to further improve employer engagement and sharing of good practice is ongoing.

## Business and administration

### Context

The college offers full-time courses at levels 2 and 3 in business, primarily first diploma, national diploma and a national certificate in business, and apprenticeship programmes in administration and customer service. Currently 133 learners are on full-time courses. Of these, 96 are aged 16-18 and seven are apprentices.

### Strengths

- High success rates for full time courses at levels 2 and 3
- Good teaching and learning
- Good support for learners
- Effective implementation of the quality improvement programme

### Areas for improvement

- Low success rate on the introductory diploma in 2006/07
- Under-developed work experience arrangements for full-time learners

### Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards are good. Success rates for all courses at levels 2 and 3 are high and significantly above national averages. In most cases they improved between 2005/06 and 2006/07. In contrast, the success rate for the introductory diploma has declined over the last three years and is below the national average. Overall and timely success rates for apprentices have improved in 2007/08 and are now significantly above national averages.

The standard of learners' work is good. Written work exhibits good understanding of business concepts and the ability to apply them in practical situations. In lessons learners articulate their ideas confidently and well.

### Quality of provision

The quality of provision and of teaching and learning are good. Teachers use a range of well-designed activities to meet learners' needs and enable them to develop and demonstrate their learning. Information learning technology is integrated well into lessons.

Assessment and monitoring of learners' progress are good. Verification is rigorous. Teachers monitor learners' progress regularly and give clear and constructive feedback on how to improve their work.

The current range of provision is narrow, but a broadening of the number of courses available is planned for 2008/09. Arrangements to provide work experience for full-time learners, although developing, are not sufficiently systematic or comprehensive.

Guidance and support for learners are good. Learners value the tutorial programme. Individual tutorials have a clear focus on learner performance. Teachers also provide high levels of support, academic and pastoral, on an informal basis outside lessons.

## Leadership and management

Leadership and management are good. Curriculum managers give priority to the improvement of learner experience and success. Lesson observations, as part of a systematic staff development process, are used to good effect to raise the quality of teaching and learning, which has developed significantly since the previous inspection. The curriculum area team work together well, in the interests of learners, to implement actions to raise the quality of provision. Sharing of good practice is effective.

## MONITORING VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Name of college: Redbridge College

Date of visit: 3-4 June 2008

### Context

Redbridge is a medium-sized general further education (GFE) college based on one main site at Little Heath in the London borough of Redbridge and a second site in Ilford town centre. Redbridge operates a partly selective system of secondary schooling, and all local schools have their own sixth form. The nearest similar colleges are Barking and Dagenham, Havering and Newham. The college has grown significantly in recent years. It has revised its curriculum offer recently and is now a wholly vocational college.

The college was last inspected in January 2007. Effectiveness of provision was satisfactory, as were achievement and standards, quality of provision and leadership and management. Capacity to improve was judged to be good. The curriculum areas inspected were either graded as good or satisfactory with the exception of health and care, and business and administration which were unsatisfactory.

The Monitoring Visit of September 2007 determined that there was 'Reasonable Progress' in each of the inspection themes examined.

### Achievement and standards

What is the extent of progress with learners' success rates, since the previous inspection and monitoring visit?	Reasonable progress
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At the previous inspection, achievement and standards were graded as good for adults and satisfactory for learners aged 16-18. The Monitoring Visit, in September 2007, considered that the college had made reasonable progress in improving success rates since the previous inspection. It had made good progress with further improving learners' retention, but achievement data were understandably incomplete and it could not be certain what final success rates would show.

Based upon complete success rate data for 2006/07, the college continues to make reasonable progress overall.

Overall success rates for both long and short courses continued to improve in 2006/07. For long courses, improvement was most marked at level 3 for learners aged 16-18 and at levels 2 and 3 for adult learners. For the latter, adult levels,

success rates are well above the recent national averages. They are around the national rate for adults at level 1.

Long course success rates for learners aged 16-18 are around national rates at levels 1 and 3, but have fallen at level 2 in 2006/07 and are now below the national rate.

Overall short course success rates have improved consistently over the last three years and are often around national rates. For adults, they are well below the national rate in 2006/07 and the college is subject to a notice to improve in respect of 15% or more of its short course provision failing to meet the published minimum levels of performance. Much of the provision identified in the notice is now no longer offered by the college.

Retention rates, for all levels and length of course in 2006/07, are at or above national rates. They have improved significantly, are high, and well above the national rate, for adult learners at level 3.

The college's self-assessment report accurately analyses success rate data and reaches conclusions which match those of inspectors.

What progress has been made with outcomes for work based learners?	Significant progress
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Achievement and standards for work based learners were judged to be inadequate at the previous inspection. At the last Monitoring Visit reasonable progress had been made in improving the outcomes for apprentices.

Since then, significant progress has been made. Framework success rates have improved from 41% in 2006/07 to 76% in 2007/08, as at May 2008, which is above the national average. Timely success rates have also significantly improved, from 37% to 50%.

The college is a substantial provider of Train to Gain and is exceeding its targets for successful outcomes for learners.

## Quality of provision

What progress has been made with the improvement of teaching and learning?	Reasonable progress
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The scheme for observing teaching and learning is thorough but still developing. Grades are improving and now show a much higher proportion of good or better lessons. However, managers have correctly identified that there is, as yet, insufficient focus on learning and that too much teaching and learning is still no better than satisfactory.

The scheme now aims to cover all teachers and trainers, including those working primarily in the workplace. Observations are carried out by two observers, to ensure



fairness. One will generally be from a different curriculum area, to aid sharing of good practice. Curriculum directors now schedule observations to best address priorities for improvement. New teachers can be observed without being graded, to make the system less threatening, until they are ready to be graded. Teachers whose lessons are graded 1 and 2 are invited to share their good practice. This has led to the development of 'bite sized courses' on topics of interest to other teachers. The outcomes of observations inform staff development plans automatically, so that staff development covers the areas of teaching and learning which most need improvement.

All staff contribute to the detail of the observation policy. The form used for recording judgements about teaching and learning is well designed, fit for purpose and flexible. Managers have observed that the process concentrates more on teaching than learning. Future plans to shift the focus to learning, will also incorporate e-learning. Considerable work has taken place recently in developing and beginning to implement the e-learning strategy. There is also a pilot scheme to train learners to participate in the observation process.

The range of broader initiatives to improve teaching and learning includes teaching key skills and skills for life as an integral element of core studies, aiding learners' understanding. The timetable is being redesigned next session to ensure that learners are not being taught for more than 90 minutes without a break, and to standardize lessons at 90 minutes, to optimise learning. A substantial and positive piece of work is in development to improve learners' target setting and aspirations.

What is the extent of progress in developing further links with employers, including the provision of learners' work experience?	Reasonable progress
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The college has undertaken substantial restructuring, not all of which is complete, to improve its links with employers. It has decided to give responsibility to the curriculum areas, with a cross-college co-ordinator to help the curriculum areas share good practice. A computer-based system will be used to check the previous contacts with each employer. There are already good links with some significant local employers, including the army and the local NHS trust. One measure of success is that employers are now choosing to contact the college, rather than waiting for the college to contact them.

Work-based learning is being redeveloped to ensure the quality is right before the numbers are allowed to grow. Advanced apprenticeships had been suspended, but are now being offered again. A particularly successful area is the Golf Academy advanced apprenticeship programme where learners work towards PGA coaching awards and compete in PGA tournaments as well as completing their advanced apprenticeships. Curriculum managers are now promoting apprenticeships as a progression route for learners in college.

In some curriculum areas, managers have been very successful in getting commercial sponsorship. For example, in hospitality, the kitchens have been

equipped with plasma screens given by companies. All the curriculum areas now have 'employer boards'. Attendance is good. The boards provide the opportunity for college curriculum managers and employers to learn from each other, and to develop the curriculum to meet employers' needs and wants.

All curriculum areas now offer work experience, although it is underdeveloped in business. In sport and leisure, considerable effort has gone into making sure that all learners now have work experience. There is a well-developed system and clear procedures for managing work experience applications. Further developments include plans for all learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to progress through work experience to paid employment and the launch of the UK Careers Academy programme to provide internships for national diploma in business and finance learners.

### Leadership and management

What progress is there with the further development of strategies to support quality improvement?	Reasonable progress
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The previous inspection determined that the college's capacity to improve was good. Self-assessment and quality assurance processes were satisfactory, with a rigorous and shrewd lesson observation process.

The previous inspection also noted the changes the college was undergoing, 'contributing to the development of a stronger culture of constructive evaluation to support the raising of standards'.

These changes have continued, with well articulated strategies to support and drive forward quality improvements. The college is well aware of what it needs to do to make further improvements. Recent changes to senior management and structures and those planned for curriculum management have their roots in improving the quality of provision. The recently-published College Operating Plan presents a clear picture of key objectives and actions, with precise key performance indicators.

Teaching and learning are improving, although too much teaching is still no better than satisfactory. The college's scheme of lesson observation is at the centre of strategies to work developmentally with teachers and to engage them in their own quality improvement. Analysis of the outcomes of observations now leads more speedily to relevant staff development. The college now has a scheme to address the capability of teachers, introduced somewhat late, but closely integrated with the scheme of lesson observations.

Improving teaching and learning is central to the college's plans to improve success rates. In particular, addressing the low success rates for level 2 learners aged 16-18 has resulted in changing approaches to teaching and learning.

Self-assessment is thorough and rigorous, but the college is working to further improve the quality of self-assessment. All managers are to be helped to maximize

their use of data, now more readily accessible to them, to inform self-assessment judgements and to write self-assessment judgements more clearly.

Internal verification has received considerable attention. It is well managed, is thorough and robust.