

Waltham Forest College

Reinspection report

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| Provider reference | 130456 |
| Published date | 17 July 2008 |

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| Audience | Post-sixteen |
| Published date | 17 July 2008 |
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Introduction

Waltham Forest College was inspected in May 2006. 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 hospitality which was found to be inadequate. Ofsted is responsible for re-inspecting all provision that is inadequate.

The inadequate hospitality curriculum area was re-inspected on 4 & 5 June 2008. The outcomes of the reinspection are as follows.

| Curriculum | Original grade | Reinspection grade |
|-------------|----------------|--------------------|
| Hospitality | 4 | 3 |

Context

The college offers a range of full-time and part-time hospitality programmes from entry level to level 4. At the time of the inspection there were 351 students, most of whom were adults on part-time courses.

Strengths

- High success rates in 2006/07 on level 1 food preparation and cooking
- Particularly good skills development in butchery and larder work
- Good work experience opportunities for full-time level 2 students

Areas for improvement

- Low success rates on level 3 food preparation and cooking
- Poor target-setting in individual learning plans

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards overall are satisfactory. At the previous inspection, some course success rates were low. These have been improved and success rates in 2006-07 for food preparation and cooking level 1 were high at 82%. However, success rates in kitchen and larder at level 3 remain low. Development of students' social and personal skills is satisfactory. Students work well with colleagues and staff. Students are well motivated and enjoy attending college. The development of vocational skills in butchery and larder work is particularly good and for other programmes, skills development is appropriate for the time they have spent on the programme.

Quality of provision

The quality of provision is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and improving. At the previous inspection the teaching of theory was poor. This has much improved and effective use is made of independent learning technology. Overall, resources are satisfactory, as is the range of provision. Links with schools have improved and the 14-19 hospitality diploma is planned to be available from 2009. Vocational visits enhance learning and good work experience opportunities exist for full-time level 2 students. At the previous inspection the development of individual learning plans (ILPs) was inadequate. Although the use of ILPs has improved, target-setting remains poor. Assessment and verification practices are satisfactory, as is tutorial support.

Leadership and management

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Following the previous inspection the departmental management was re-structured. Leadership is now strong and staff have a keen focus on raising standards. Professional development for staff is good. The self-assessment report is broadly accurate, although some actions to improve have not yet been fully achieved. The recording of some observations of teaching and learning need further improvement.

MONITORING VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Name of college: Waltham Forest College

Date of visit: 4 & 5 June 2008

Context

Waltham Forest college is a large general further education college in North London. The mission guiding the direction of the college is 'Working with our communities to realise potential through lifelong learning'. The London Borough of Waltham Forest is extremely diverse with areas of relative prosperity to the north and other wards amongst the 10% most deprived in the country. Many students attending the college travel from Redbridge, Haringey, Hackney and a range of other areas.

This monitoring visit follows the inspection in June 2006, Annual assessment visit in October 2006 and a monitoring visit in December 2007. At the previous inspection, overall effectiveness was judged to be satisfactory. Capacity to improve was judged to be good; achievement and standards, quality of provision and leadership and management were graded as satisfactory. Of the six subject sector areas inspected, two were graded as good, three as satisfactory and hospitality graded as inadequate. At the time of this monitoring visit, hospitality was re-inspected and graded as satisfactory. The college has recently appointed a new principal who is due to start in September 2008.

Achievement and standards

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| What progress has been made in improving success rates since the previous inspection and monitoring visit? | Reasonable progress |
|--|---------------------|

The college has made reasonable progress in improving success rates since the previous inspection and monitoring visit. Success rates for all courses improved between 2005/06 and 2006/07 by three percentage points to 79% and most courses were either at or slightly above national averages. Early indications are that retention has improved this year, and the college has predicted that success rates will improve in line with targets set. However, success rates on level 3 long courses for 16-18 year olds remain a problem and were approximately four% below national averages for 2006/07. The college anticipates little improvement to this in the current year. Success rates on short courses continue to be low, although the college has identified reasons for this and appropriate actions taken to ensure improvements. It is too early to see the impact of this. The college continues to monitor achievements well and the course review processes have been improved.

Quality of provision

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| What improvements have been made to the provision of key skills since the previous inspection and monitoring visit? | Reasonable progress |
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The college has made reasonable progress to improve the provision of key skills since the last monitoring visit. College data shows that success rates between 2005/06 and 2006/07 have improved by seven percentage points to 29%. The college has focused well on key skills and predicts that success rates for this year will be greatly improved. Students' understanding of the importance of key skills has been improved and they now see this as an important aspect of their course, particularly for those wishing to progress to higher education. The integration of key skills into curriculum areas has been improved since the previous inspection and there has been a concerted effort to improve performance on key skills tests. Students are now given clear targets for key skills achievement.

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| Since the previous monitoring visit and inspection what further improvements have been made to the tutorial processes? | Significant progress |
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The college has made significant progress in making further improvements to the tutorial processes. The introduction of an electronic monitoring system has been successfully piloted in two curriculum areas. This has helped staff and students to quickly identify areas for improvement and generates useful information for discussion and target-setting during tutorials. The college plans to introduce this system across the college at the start of the new academic year. Tutors and managers have good opportunities to share good practice and the processes for this have been greatly improved. This has led to the introduction of a cross-college framework for tutorials, as well as the sharing of useful learning materials. The college tutoring and achievement manager works closely with a local sixth form college to further share good practice and resources.

Staff have a clearer understanding of their roles and responsibilities and the impact of tutorials is now more thoroughly monitored. Better use of feedback has helped in this process and there are plans to improve this further. The college also has plans to accredit work undertaken in tutorials.

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| Following on from the previous inspection and monitoring visit what further progress has been made in improving attendance and punctuality? | Reasonable progress |
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The college has made reasonable progress in improving attendance and punctuality. The college continues to focus strongly on improvements and has put appropriate procedures in place to ensure students attend and are more punctual. Managers and staff at all levels continue to monitor students' progress in attendance and punctuality. A newly introduced electronic monitoring system, which has been piloted in two curriculum areas, has proved to be a useful tool for this. Students in these areas report that they can regularly look at feedback from the system which helps them improve. Staff who have piloted this system are able to easily identify poor attendance and punctuality and are able to quickly respond.

The college clearly recognises where there are key issues on attendance and punctuality and are making sure that they specifically monitor the under-performance of female students under 16 years of age, whose attendance so far this year is low at 65%. The college has introduced clear targets for learners' attendance, and some curriculum areas have successfully introduced rewards to reinforce good attendance. Students are appropriately disciplined if they fail to attend.

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| What strategies has the college implemented to share best practices in teaching and learning to improve those areas identified as satisfactory at the previous inspection? | Significant progress |
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The college has made significant progress in identifying strategies to share best practices in teaching and learning. The role of the advanced practitioners has been strengthened and there is a good focus on improving teaching and learning across the college. Advanced practitioners are used well in mentoring and training both new and existing staff. The role of subject learning coaches has also been improved and they are used effectively to share good practice. The college has bought in leading external teaching practitioners to introduce and disseminate good practice and share ideas. The processes for observations of teaching and learning have been improved and the college has had some external moderation. The results from internal college observations are generally well analysed and used to identify and share good practice within curriculum areas.