

MONITORING VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Name of Provider: Claverham Community College

Date of visit: 20 January 2009

Context

Claverham Community College is situated in Battle comprises a comprehensive school, a youth club, a workplace nursery, an adult education department and a sports centre. It is also a specialist sports college, and a training school and head partner for the Hastings and Rother school-centred initial teacher training.

Claverham Community Education Department (Claverham CED) delivers the adult provision for the college. The adult provision consists of accredited and non-accredited adult and community learning. Claverham CED contracts directly with Sussex Learning and Skills Council (LSC) for its accredited provision. The college is subcontracted by Hastings College to deliver all non-accredited provision.

The adult learning service employs 48 part-time tutors, three curriculum co-ordinators and one adult and community learning manager. The manager reports to the principal of Claverham Community College.

Claverham Community College was reinspected in 2007. Overall effectiveness, leadership and management, quality improvement, equality of opportunity and the fine arts subject sector area were all graded as satisfactory.

Achievement and standards

How much progress has the college made in improving students' achievements?	Reasonable progress
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Since the previous inspection, the college has made reasonable progress in improving students' achievements. The provider has continued to make further improvements to the quality and accuracy of management information. In particular, data to monitor students' retention, achievement and success rates has improved.

In 2007/08, overall student retention was 92%. This is a two percentage point reduction from the previous year. However, the provider closely monitors student withdrawals and has taken appropriate actions where the quality of service fails to meet the provider's and students' expectations. Overall success rates for accredited provision in 2007/08 have improved by nine percentage points from the previous year to 83%. The most significant improvements are in the languages provision.

Since the reinspection, the monitoring of attendance and the contacting of students with low attendance have much improved. Attendance in 2007/08 improved by 1% to 89%. Overall achievement rates continue to be high and have remained at 98% in 2007/08.

Quality of provision

How much progress has been made to increase student numbers from under-represented groups?	Reasonable progress
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At the previous full inspection, a key area for improvement was the need to effectively widen participation by under-represented groups. At the reinspection, actions to increase under-represented student numbers had been put into place although it was too early to assess their impact. Since then, the provider has improved marketing and broadened the service offer. The number of new students enrolled in 2007/08 increased by 10 percentage points to 59%. In the same period, the number of male students enrolled increased by 9%. Direct targeting of deprived areas resulted in a few students enrolling in 2007/08. The head of the service has made new contacts with a range of community and business organisations to promote the service and offer bespoke courses, for example, first aid for babies. Generally, these new contacts have resulted in a disappointing response. However, the provider continues to consider new ways to further attract under-represented groups.

How much progress has been made since the previous inspection to further improve the implementation of RARPA?	Reasonable progress
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At the reinspection in 2007, it was judged that the assessment, recording and monitoring of individual learning had improved, although it was too early to judge the impact. Since then, the provider has continued to make further improvements to the RARPA process and there is sufficient evidence to support a judgement of reasonable progress.

In consultation with students and tutors, individual learning plans (ILPs) have been re-designed. The forms are now much easier to use and better meet the needs of students. Staff development has improved tutors' understanding of the RARPA process. The ILP has been successfully implemented across the whole service with a modified version for shorter courses. The ILP has been appropriately adapted by some tutors to further extend the initial assessment and record subject knowledge skills tests. The ILP is used well on accredited programmes to complement awarding body material. The provider has recognised that some aspects of the ILP are too simplistic and further developments are needed. Students are now more positive about completing the paperwork and better able to identify the benefits.

The quality of recording on the ILP is variable. Few students identify specific personal learning objectives. Feedback from tutors is mostly insufficiently detailed. The service acknowledges that it has concentrated on implementing a common ILP and has further work to do to improve the standard of recording and to fully implement the ILP into the learning experience.

Leadership and management

How much progress has the college made in maintaining/ improving the self-assessment process and action planning?	Insufficient progress
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At the previous inspection, the self-assessment process was judged to be good and linked well to the quality improvement plan. Since then, Claverham Community College has maintained the quality of self-assessment. The latest report is detailed and highlights many strengths and areas for further improvement. The quality improvement plan is monitored regularly to assess the status of outstanding actions. At the time of the monitoring visit, many of the actions in the quality improvement plan had been completed to the provider's satisfaction. However, the latest quality improvement plan does not sufficiently link to the self-assessment report. Many areas for improvement stated in the self-assessment report do not feature in the quality improvement plan. Some targets in the quality improvement plan are insufficiently clear or specific to judge success of an action that is leading towards continuous improvement. For example, an action to develop good practice material for tutors has as a success criterion that all tutors receive a copy.

How much progress has been made to maintain/improve the quality of feedback from the observation of teaching and learning and action planning for quality improvement?	Insufficient progress
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The reinspection report found the provider had implemented a good observation of teaching and learning system. The service has maintained the good quality of recorded information at observation. Learning is sufficiently addressed in observation feedback. Observation records with an action plan to improve teaching and learning are appropriate and followed up well. Tutors appreciate the feedback they receive and most describe the actions as useful. The service manager monitors and oversees the process closely. Since the previous inspection, no inadequate teaching and learning have been recorded.

Many observation records have no action planning for improvement. Identification of actions to improve the service's overall quality of teaching and learning is insufficient. The provider acknowledges that some of the planned development activity has not been fully implemented and requires further attention. The quality framework

declares an intention to set targets to improve teaching and learning grades, however, no targets appear in the quality improvement plan. Activities to support tutors improve teaching and learning are insufficient. The planned mentoring scheme has yet to be implemented. In 2007/08, teaching and learning observations were not moderated.