

## MONITORING VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Name of college: Craven College  
Date of visit: 11 February 2009

### Context

Craven College is a medium sized further education college that provides programmes in all sector subject areas. The college draws its learners from the dispersed towns and villages in the Yorkshire Dales and the Aire Valley corridor. The college works over a large number of sites and a number of outreach centres. The two principle sites are located in Skipton town centre and Aireville. The college has a Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) in business, leadership and management, together with two joint CoVEs in tourism and aviation.

In February 2009, 1,446 of the college's 4,112 learners were full-time, with the majority of these being learners aged 16 to 18. Two hundred and eighty three Employer Responsive learners and 570 Train to Gain learners were enrolled on programmes. A commercial training division of the college, Tyro Training, provides workforce development provision for local and regional employers.

The college was last inspected in April 2007. The provision was judged good in all areas apart from key question 1, achievement and standards, which was judged satisfactory. Educational and social inclusion were judged outstanding.

Since the previous inspection, the college has developed a number of new partnerships with colleges and private organisations. The college is currently at the initial application stage for a new college build with an expected completion of September 2011.

### Achievement and standards

What progress has been made to successfully reverse the downward trend in success rates for some learners?	Significant progress
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Achievement data for 2007/08 shows that the actions taken by the college to address the declining success rates of 2006/07 were successful. Changes were made to individual job roles and to the reporting structures of the quality team in the college creating an increased focus on performance management. Success rates on long courses for learners aged 16 to 18 improved markedly in 2007/08 at levels 1, 2 and 3 and are now above the relevant national averages.

For learners aged 19 and over, success rates on long courses at levels 2 and 3 also improved markedly and are now close to the national averages. The only area where the success rate declined was at level 1. It declined by 5% and is now well below the national average. The college is aware of this issue and identify that English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) and Skills for Life programmes were too long for the client groups, many of whom were transient migrant workers, resulting in many leaving before completing the programme. Changes have been made to these programmes to better meet the needs of these client groups.

What progress has been made by the college in continuing to improve the success rates on work-based learning and Train to Gain programmes?	Significant progress
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The overall apprenticeship success rate has improved markedly and in 2007/08 was considerably higher than the national average for both apprenticeships and advanced apprenticeships. The college's data show that this high rate is being maintained in 2008/09. The college has successfully tackled under performance in sector subject areas where success was low, for example in hairdressing and health and social care, partly by focusing more closely on learners' retention and attendance. Timely success rates have also improved and are higher than the national average.

The overall success rate on Train to Gain programmes has improved considerably and is now high. Timely success has also improved considerably and is also high. A high proportion of learners complete their programmes successfully in the planned time. The college has increased success rates while significantly growing the provision. Currently, 586 learners are on programme, compared with 171 at this time last year.

The college began offering Entry to Employment provision in January 2007. So far it has a good record of enabling learners to achieve their key objectives.

#### Quality of provision

What progress has the college made in improving its system for the observation of teaching and learning?	Reasonable progress
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The observation of teaching and learning system is more rigorous, supports staff better and focuses more closely on what students learn. Closer attention is now paid to ensuring all full- and part-time teachers and work-based learning staff are observed annually. Tutorials are now included in the observation programme. Staff receive shorter notice of when they are to be observed and not told which lesson is to be observed. Observations now focus more closely on the learning taking place in lessons and often look at lessons in courses where there are concerns about quality. Good use is made of joint observations, using college staff and also external partners. Tutors now have opportunities to participate in peer observations.

Teachers, whose teaching is graded satisfactory or inadequate, receive good support from mentors and coaches and are re-observed within six weeks. The implementation of action plans following observation is closely monitored. The outcomes of observation inform staff development and appraisal appropriately. Mechanisms are in place to share good practice. Curriculum managers use the process well to inform their understanding of their curriculum areas.

What progress has been made in monitoring the success rates of learners receiving additional learning support?	Reasonable progress
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The collection, analysis and use of information to monitor the success rates of learners receiving additional learning support have improved. Relevant data is now on a shared drive so that all staff now use the same up-to-date information. The management information system produces a wide range of useful reports including retention and success rates for learners with different disabilities and learning difficulties. Staff now interrogate data to identify trends and issues, to target resources more effectively and to measure the impact of support initiatives. Improvements have been made to support mechanisms, for example, retention officers have been recruited, and group and individual support are more closely tailored to learners' needs. The success rate for learners receiving support has shown year-on-year improvement and in 2007/08 was close to the college's overall success rate.

## Leadership and management

What progress has the college made to improve the use of data to support self-assessment and to monitor the performance of different learner groups?	Reasonable progress
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Data is now more accessible to a wider range of staff and is centrally provided so that staff are confident they are using the right data. The formats and templates used for reports are controlled better resulting in a consistent presentation that staff are now familiar with. Course tutors now take greater ownership of the data for their programmes. An appropriate range of staff training has taken place.

The college uses a traffic-light system to highlight performance at both course and divisional level and makes better use of national averages at sector subject area and course level to evaluate and monitor performance. Each division is now allocated performance targets based on its own performance in the previous year rather than a whole college target.

The college is developing its use of technology to manage provision. For example, it is piloting the use of electronic registers and electronic individual learning plans.

What progress has the college made in improving the moderation of self-assessment?	Significant progress
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The college has made significant progress in improving the moderation of its self-assessment report. A more critical approach has been adopted when reviewing performance at all levels in the organisation. Success rates are now the key measure used to underpin judgements. The criteria used to judge performance at course level are now more rigorous, resulting in a more realistic grading of individual courses.

The college's steering group for quality sample a good range of course assessment reports prior to the compilation of divisional reports. Divisional reports are scrutinised by the full senior management group and a governor. Divisional managers are interrogated in detail to check the validity of the judgements made and the grades awarded. Governors on the quality strategy group are now better informed as a result of their participation in this process. Divisional quality improvement plans are now better focused because of the rigour of the validation and moderation process.

The college self-assessment report is now reviewed by the college's senior managers and governors and by representatives from partner colleges who form a peer review group. The section of the report relating to how the college meets the needs of employers is sent to a range of local employers for their comments. All sections of the college, including the business units, now self-assess the quality of their provision. The schedule for the next round of self-assessment has been modified in order to complete the process earlier.