

## MONITORING VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Name of college: Capel Manor  
Date of visit: 29 June 2009

### Context

Capel Manor College is a specialist land-based college. Its main campus is in the London Borough of Enfield and there are four additional centres across London: Gunnersbury Park in west London; Regent's Park in central London; Crystal Palace Park in south London; and Castle Green Centre in Barking and Dagenham, east London. Provision is also available at an additional centre in Edmonton Green, run as a joint collaborative venture with a general further education college.

Courses are offered in horticulture, landscaping, garden design, floristry, flower arranging, balloon display, countryside studies, arboriculture, animal care and saddlery. Most subjects are offered from entry to advanced level on a full- or part-time basis. A range of short courses is offered for industry and local communities. A work-based horticulture apprenticeship scheme started in August 2003 and an arboriculture apprenticeship scheme was launched in 2007. The college runs a Foundation Degree in garden design, developed in partnership with Birkbeck, University of London. An initiative for school pupils aged 14 to 16, the HEAVEN Academy, has run since 2002. In 2007/08 there were 1,100 full-time equivalent students on further education courses. Adults account for 76% of the full-time equivalent students.

The college was last inspected in May 2008 when the overall effectiveness of provision was judged to be good, as were achievement and standards, the quality of provision and leadership and management. Capacity to improve was graded as satisfactory.

### Achievement and standards

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| How much progress has the college made to improve students' achievements? | Reasonable progress |
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The college has made reasonable progress to improve students' achievements. Success rates for all long courses in 2007/08 were 73% in 2007/08, an increase of two percentage points on the previous year. In this

year, success rates for 16 to 18 year olds on level 1 long courses fell by four percentage points compared with the previous year, but at levels 2 and 3 they show a clear trend of improvement. However, they are still below the 2006/07 national average for similar colleges at all levels. For adult learners, success rates on long courses have improved consistently at all levels and they are above the national average for similar colleges at levels 1 and 3, and comparable to national figures at level 2. Retention rates for the current year 2008/09 have increased, particularly for learners aged 16 to 18.

Success rates for school pupils aged 14 to 16 attending the college have increased and were 69% in 2008. Overall and timely success rates for work-based learners are satisfactory. There was an increase in the number and proportion of learners on level 3 programmes progressing to higher education in 2007/08.

Success rates for key skills have shown consistent improvement over the past three years. For 16 to 18 year olds they were 62% in 2007/08 which is comparable to national averages. However, they were below the national average for adults, with retention rates very low at only 47% in 2007/08.

The use and analysis of value-added data is generally under developed in the college. There is some significant underperformance in BTEC national certificate qualifications, although the number of students involved is low.

Analysis of achievement for minority ethnic learners show that, apart from White British learners who performed below the national average in 2006/07, there is no significant difference in overall success rates for any group of learner compared with similar colleges. In 2007/08, adult learners receiving additional learning support obtained the same success rates as learners not receiving this support. However, learners aged 16 to 18 who received additional support underperformed, with an overall success rate of 63% compared with 79% for learners not supported.

#### Quality of provision

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| How much progress has been made in improving the reliability of lesson observations? | Reasonable progress |
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Reasonable progress has been made to improve the reliability of lesson observations. Training to improve the accuracy of lesson observations has taken place for a large number of staff. Joint lesson observations between college staff, and with consultants, have also been undertaken to improve the consistency of judgements. Lesson observation forms are moderated by staff

within departments to ensure the grade awarded matches the text, but there are no cross-college moderation procedures.

Comprehensive staff training to improve the quality of teaching and learning has taken place. Staff whose lesson is graded as no better than satisfactory receive good support and training. They are re-observed within a few weeks and an improvement is usually seen. Lesson observations also cover the work of learning support assistants in the classroom. Peer observations of teaching and learning take place, but the college has no formal procedures either to ensure all staff participate or to evaluate the benefits derived from these observations.

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| How much progress has been made in the use of information and learning technologies (ILT) to support learning? | Reasonable progress |
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The previous inspection reported insufficient use of ILT to support learning and the college has made reasonable progress since then. The use of the college's virtual learning environment (VLE) has expanded to most courses and key staff have been trained in its use. Assignments and course notes are now available on-line. Students are referred to other websites for study and are kept informed of college news and events. The college has its own website, with resources that celebrate students' success. Information about the college's support services, such as counselling, careers and examinations, is available on-line.

All curriculum areas have a VLE champion and these champions work well as a team and keep staff updated on developments. The use of the VLE is becoming increasingly important as the college extends its provision to other parts of London. Senior managers recognise that further progress is still required and there are plans to develop more interactive resources for the VLE. In addition to the VLE, the college has obtained funding for mobile learning equipment that enables students to carry out biological surveys.

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| Has the college improved the effectiveness of tutorials? | Reasonable progress |
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The college has made reasonable progress to improve the effectiveness of group tutorials. At the time of the previous inspection, senior managers recognised the need for more formally structured group tutorials and these now take place regularly for learners aged 16 to 18. Schemes of work for these tutorials exemplify the holistic approach that is taken and cover the key themes from the 'Every child matters' agenda well. Both paper-based and on-

line tutorial resources are available. The quality of group tutorials is evaluated by observations as part of the college's lesson observation procedures.

A less structured approach is taken for adult learners and formal group tutorials do not take place regularly. However, many topics that might be covered through group tutorials, such as the development of study skills and careers advice, are integrated with the mainstream programme of learners.

Individual meetings between tutors and learners take place during the year to review progress. However, staff are not allocated specific time for these meetings and so they tend to take place either at the expense of group tutorial, teaching or the teacher's personal time.

#### Leadership and management

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| How much progress has been made to improve the precision of self-assessment, action planning and target-setting? | Reasonable progress |
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At the previous inspection, self-assessment, action planning and target-setting were not sufficiently robust. The college has made reasonable progress since then to improve them. Staff have received training in target-setting and the targets set are more realistic and achievable. End of year course reviews now include evidence that supports the judgements made and these reviews contribute to the college's self-assessment procedures and the quality improvement plan. Course teams hold progress reviews during the year and any outstanding issues are raised at subsequent team and committee meetings. Documentation for the final course review includes an evaluation of learner performance by gender and disability, but not race. The progress of apprentices in achieving units can now be monitored electronically.

The college has made insufficient progress in monitoring attendance rates for learners. The attendance and punctuality of individual learners are monitored by staff, and appropriate actions are taken to improve them when necessary. However, attendance rates and punctuality are not formally monitored either at course or college level and no attendance figures are available for evaluation as part of the college's quality assurance procedures. The college is planning to do this when electronic registration of attendance is introduced in September 2009.

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| How much progress has been made to integrate key skills into vocational areas? | Reasonable progress |
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The college has made reasonable progress to integrate key skills into the vocational curriculum. A specialist member of staff has been appointed to coordinate work in numeracy. All vocational teams are now required to identify areas within their subjects where key skills can be integrated. Where the full range of skills can not easily be integrated, specific assignments relating to the vocational area have been developed. Students complete practice exams on-line. Wider key skills have been further developed, for example by getting learners to organise events as a practical task. The number of students who complete successfully wider skills units has increased and the overall success rates for key skills have improved, particularly for 16-18 year olds.