

## MONITORING VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Name of college: Salford City College  
Date of visit: 23 June 2009

### Context

Salford City College was established as a general further education college (GFE) in January 2009 following the merger of Salford College of Further Education, Eccles Sixth Form College and Pendleton Sixth Form College. The new college has four main centres: Pendleton, Eccles, Worsley and the city campus, each with their own centre principal and two smaller sites at De La Salle and Winton. It is now the second largest college in the Greater Manchester Learning and Skills Council (LSC) area. In 2008/09, the new college enrolled 5,680 learners aged 16 to 18 and 5,540 adult learners across all 15 sector subject areas. The college has a £2.48million LSC contract for employer responsive provision with 357 apprentices and almost 3,000 Train to Gain learners. In addition, it delivers a £500,000 contract for personal and community development learning (PCDL) provision. Around 62% of the college's learners live in Salford with the majority of the rest coming from Manchester, Trafford or Bolton.

The city of Salford is situated in the Greater Manchester conurbation, running westwards from the centre of Manchester. The city covers 37 square miles and consists of the five districts of Salford, Eccles, Worsley, Irlam and Cadishead, and Swinton and Pendlebury. It has a population of 220,000 and, in the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2007, was the 15<sup>th</sup> most deprived of 354 local authorities. The percentage of pupils who completed key stage 4 in 2008 and who achieved five A\* to C grades at general certificate in secondary education (GCSE) including mathematics and English was 40.3%. Whilst improved on previous years, this is well below the national average of 47.6%. The percentage of Key Stage 4 school leavers not continuing in education, employment or training (NEET) in November 2008 has reduced from 8.6% in 2004 to 5.9%. In 2008, 75.1% of young people in Salford entered full-time education, which is an increase of 4.2% compared with 2007.

The college's mission is 'to inspire people to create opportunities and enrich lives through learning'. The college has maintained Pendleton's Beacon Status and is a partner with others in two Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVEs), one in construction, the other in media studies. The Eccles Centre has recently been approved to offer the International Baccalaureate (I.B.).

## Achievement and standards

<p>Has a baseline of achievement and standards been established across the new college? How are students' achievements and standards being measured in 2008/09 and beyond? What impact has the merger had on retention in 2008/09?</p>	<p>Significant Progress</p>
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The college has combined data from the individual centres to provide cross-college levels of standards and achievement. Data is used at centre level for monitoring and tracking purposes. The management information system used throughout the college allows data to be analysed in a wide variety of ways to support the effective identification of issues and monitors the impact of intervention strategies. Challenging benchmarks are used as comparators for student achievement and standards. For advanced level provision sixth form college benchmarks are used and for all other provision success rates are compared with the national average for all colleges. Where previous year's national averages are used an uplift figure is included to take account of the upward national trend. If success rates for courses are already at or above national rates then a further aspirational target is set to be in the top 10% of colleges for that aspect.

College data shows that in-year retention has improved in 2008/09, covering the period of the merger, continuing an upward trend seen in the previous three years. This is the case for both learners aged 16 to 18 and those aged 19+ for long courses provision at levels 1, 2 and 3. Retention rates are above or well above national comparators. Courses whose performance are below the college's high expectations have been identified and the managers responsible for these meet with senior managers every month to monitor their progress against agreed targets.

## Quality of provision

<p>What progress has been made in further improving the quality of teaching and learning and the use of information learning technology (ILT)? Is good practice being shared across the sites of the new college?</p>	<p>Reasonable progress</p>
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A coherent process to lesson observations has been agreed since the merger. All staff have been observed by their line manager and as part of the curriculum review process which is an integral aspect of quality assurance and monitoring across the new college. A process of standardisation, training and paired observations has been implemented to ensure consistency across the organisation. The outcomes from lesson observations are collated by centre managers; a standardised format for collating the data and identifying key strengths and areas for improvement is being developed as part of the new centralised quality assurance arrangements.

Peer observations and regular meetings are used to share good practice across centres. Staff interviewed on the visit, from each of the former colleges, are positive about the changes since merger and the sharing of resources and delivery methods.

All staff graded as satisfactory or inadequate are re-observed following support and mentoring from learning coaches. Subject learning coaches have been appointed to cover all sites and curriculum areas. Each have been set targets and given a project brief to improve the quality of teaching and learning and share good practice. Whole college training days have been implemented with a focus on generic aspects such as behaviour management, tutorials and functional skills.

The college has worked hard to harmonise information technology systems across the sites. An audit in the use of ILT has been carried out and staff have been awarded bursaries to develop innovative ways of using technology to support learning. Examples of good practice such as satellite navigation systems in geography field work are shared at team meetings and staff development sessions.

What progress has the college made towards integrated student support systems since the merger?	Reasonable progress
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A number of strategies have been put in place to support harmonisation of student support systems across the different centres. The assistant principals responsible for learner services meet on a regular basis to support sharing of good practice and collaborative working. A common timetable across all sites will be introduced in September to ensure students have the same tutorial provision. There will be a common tutorial programme to ensure a consistent approach but differentiated to meet the needs of different groups of learners, with activity weeks and ECM themes as a main component. The successful programme management structure used by the former Pendleton College is being implemented across all sites. The system is used to support learners and their progression, particularly those considered at risk of not achieving. Enrolment processes have been harmonised so that potential students applying to any centre can be supported on to the most appropriate course within the whole college, or externally.

Already, in the short time since the merger, extra curricular activities have been realigned to take advantage of the larger student base. Some sporting teams have achieved national success. The behaviour policy has been harmonised and an integrated approach to transport has been put in place to support student access to all sites.

What progress has the merged college made in responding to local needs and further developing its curriculum?	Significant Progress
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The college has made significant progress in this area. Each centre has an assistant principal for curriculum and quality and a key objective for them has been to ensure curriculum coherence across all provision. The curriculum offers from all centres are shared as are the curriculum planning spreadsheets. This has led to improvements, for example, in the offer for learners aged 14 to 16 and there are already increased applications from this cohort for September. There are clearer progression routes for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and enhanced use of expertise across community provision, thus broadening the offer and increasing its responsiveness.

The links with local organisations have improved, for example with the local authority. The college plays a leading role in a number of initiatives, including responding to the current economic climate and supporting those at risk of redundancy. One example of this was where the '6 months plus' offer was used to support 48 men on jobseekers allowance through a NVQ level 2 security course and other training with 40 of the men securing employment. Links with other bodies, for example the primary care trust and social services, have also been further developed to increase the college's ability to respond effectively to local needs. There has been significant progress in school's liaison and strengthening links with the local university.

The college is now introducing the international baccalaureate and taking a key role in the development of the new diplomas, leading on a number of strands. It is successfully working with a whole range of groups and initiatives to raise the aspirations of its learners. The new Business Centre has a completely integrated approach and improved marketing and co-ordination in its work with employers. It now acts as a one stop shop for customers, leading to greater responsiveness and more efficient use of resources.

#### Leadership and management

What progress has been made in establishing a new structure for the college? Are key priorities identified and disseminated across all sites?	Significant Progress
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The merger of staff from the three colleges has been very well managed with clear communications from senior managers and the human resources department at all stages of the process. A new structure has been established across the college; roles, responsibilities and accountability are clear across all sites and at all levels. A broad range of new management opportunities were available to staff from across all of the former colleges and many have changed job roles and sites as appointments

have been made in the new structure. External appointments have been made where vacancies remained. The process appears to have been completed smoothly and managers interviewed during the visit are enthusiastic about their new roles and the opportunities of a single college in Salford. Management away days have quickly brought the new teams together with a focused agenda on learners, quality improvement and sharing good practice. All staff and governors have been involved in developing the mission for the college and these are supported by an agreed set of values. Aspects of good practice from across all the former colleges have been used in developing new ways of working. Throughout the restructure process there has been a strong focus on minimising the disruption to learners and meeting their needs. Key priorities have been identified and a consistent system of performance management and monitoring has been quickly established.

What progress has been made in further improving self-assessment and quality assurance systems and their impact?	Significant Progress
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At the point of merger the college established a quality improvement plan for each centre and progress against their targets has been monitored regularly since January 2009. The new quality assurance process, implemented in September 2009, is well considered and fully integrated into the strategic planning of the college. A calendar of monitoring and reporting activities to governors, senior managers and centre managers has been established. Key priorities have been agreed. Performance management processes, including the establishment of management information systems, have been developed and are being used effectively to further raise standards. College data indicates an improvement in retention since the merger.