

The Grimsby Group: Yorkshire Coast College

Partial reinspection report

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Introduction

Yorkshire Coast College was last inspected between 2 and 6 March 2009. The college's overall effectiveness was judged satisfactory; however, the sub-grade for equality of opportunity within the leadership and management grade and the subject area of hospitality and catering were judged inadequate. Both these aspects of the college's work have been reinspected.

The outcome of the reinspection is as follows:

Aspect of the common inspection framework	Original grade	Reinspection grade
Equality and diversity	4	3

Context

Yorkshire Coast College merged with the Grimsby Institute of Further Education and Higher Education in January 2010 to form the Grimsby Group. Yorkshire Coast College is a small general further education college based on three sites in Scarborough. It serves Scarborough, the surrounding districts and Ryedale. The college offers courses in all subject areas. In 2008/09, the college enrolled nearly 3,000 learners, of whom just under half studied full time. The college offered courses to 216 apprentices and 288 pupils aged 14 to 16 from local schools. It has a small amount of higher education provision.

Equality and diversity

The profile of equality and diversity has been raised successfully with learners, staff and governors including through the 'FRED' campaign based on values of freedom, respect, equality and diversity. Mandatory equality and diversity tutorial topics are in place supported by a helpful range of resources. The inclusion of equality and diversity 'prompts' in lesson plans and lesson observation records has focused teachers' attention on its promotion through teaching and learning. Some teachers, however, have limited confidence and expertise in developing the themes fully. Several of these initiatives are at an early stage of implementation and have yet to be evaluated fully. Some impact is already evident in the development of learners' awareness and understanding.

The equality and diversity committee includes a learner representative. Monitoring of the action plan, arising out of the single equality scheme, has increased after a loss of momentum over the recent period of merger. Annual reporting of equality and diversity monitoring has fallen behind schedule but is tabled for a forthcoming committee meeting. Managers from the Grimsby Group are supporting Yorkshire Coast College staff in the adoption of the Group's equality and diversity policies and in updating assessments on the impact of their measures.

The analysis of the performance of different groups of learners is improving in rigour and depth. Groups of learners of minority ethnic heritage are too small for

meaningful statistical analysis. In 2008/09, the achievement gap narrowed for adults but widened for learners aged 16 to 18. Specific actions are in place in curriculum action plans to tackle this issue. The group of learners recorded as 'of unknown status' in terms of their learning difficulties and/or disabilities is relatively large and underperforms compared to peer groups. The college has an action for improvement in place in recognition of this concern.

The staff profile is representative of the learner profile. Governors are seeking to match the learner profile more closely when recruiting new governors, with some recent success.

What does Yorkshire Coast College need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that equality and diversity related policies are assessed for their impact on different groups of learners by reviewing their content and context in relation to Yorkshire Coast College learners while adhering to the tight timescale set for completion of this work.
- Support teachers further to increase the focus on developing equality and diversity themes in both lesson plans and schemes of work through further training, the use of exemplars, sharing of good practice and by strengthening the evaluation of this work through lesson observations.
- Ensure that formal, regular monitoring of the equality and diversity action plan takes place as part of the work of the equality and diversity committee. Ensure that the formal reporting of equality and diversity measures to the advisory board and the board of governors takes place annually and meets the set timescales.
- Reduce the number of learners who are classified as 'unknown' in the learning difficulty and/or disability category to ensure that appropriate support is put in place for those who need it.

Subject area

The outcome of the reinspection is as follows:

Subject area	Original grade	Reinspection grade
Hospitality and catering	4	3

Context

Courses are offered at foundation and intermediate level in food preparation and cooking, professional cookery and food and drink service. Advanced level courses are offered in professional cookery and hospitality supervision. Courses are also offered at the Whitby Catering School. Of the 218 learners who study college-based courses, two thirds are adults, who mostly study part time. The majority of learners aged 16 to 18 study full time. Most learners study at foundation and intermediate level. Male learners outnumber females slightly. A very few learners are from minority ethnic groups. Some 40 learners are on employment-based Train to Gain courses.

Key findings

- Success rates on long courses have increased considerably from a low base; most are similar to national averages. Success rates on short courses, although high, have declined to below the very high national average. Retention rates on advanced courses are low. Success rates on employment-based Train to Gain courses have increased markedly but too few learners complete their qualifications within the time allocated.
- Standards of work on foundation level courses are high. Learners take responsibility and work well with a minimum of supervision or intervention from teachers. They produce high quality food for the college's restaurant and interact effectively with customers including demonstrating good food service skills. Standards of work at intermediate and advanced level are satisfactory.
- Learners work well in teams and support each other effectively. Teachers and learners work productively together in a professional atmosphere of mutual respect. Attendance is high on intermediate courses, satisfactory on most other courses, but low on one foundation level course. Learners work in a safe environment and pay good attention to adopting safe practices.
- The quality of teaching and learning has improved considerably. Lessons are at least satisfactory, mostly well planned and supported by detailed schemes of work. In a minority of lessons, teachers make too little use of the much improved information and learning technology (ILT) resources. Teachers' use of questions in lessons is often at a superficial level and fails to extend learners' knowledge.
- Assessment planning is thorough and responsive to learners' needs. Teachers are flexible in their approach and encourage learners to take ownership of their assessment plan. Learners are confident to request assessments when they feel

they are ready and are well informed about their progress. Internal verification is accurate and reliable.

- The range of provision is satisfactory. Several revisions have been made to the curriculum to match learners' needs more effectively although Train to Gain provision does not match learners' and employers' needs fully, particularly the length of course and choice of qualification aim. Plans to increase advanced level provision to support learners' progression further are in hand. Links with employers have been strengthened recently and are satisfactory.
- Much closer monitoring of learners' progress, particularly for those at risk of underperformance, has been implemented recently and has contributed to improved attendance and retention rates. However, underperformance remains a concern on a very few courses and not enough employment-based learners are supported sufficiently well to complete their courses in the allocated time. Personal care and support are good.
- Managers have taken recent firm action to bring about improvements using sharply focused and closely monitored action plans. Staff have benefited from regular staff development and good support from managers. Much needed development of resources is ongoing; improvements already in place are having a positive impact on learners' experience at college. Promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory.
- Self-assessment is broadly accurate and realistic. However, the self-assessment report is overly descriptive. Some data are used inconsistently and averages used for comparison are not always appropriate. Managers' confidence has improved in the use of centrally-held data to monitor learners' performance. Links between the central management information team and the curriculum area are now much stronger.

What does Yorkshire Coast College need to do to improve further?

- Monitor learners' progress and attendance closely and regularly, particularly on employment-based courses and on courses with low attendance. Take prompt action to support learners at risk of underperformance or withdrawal.
- Support teachers to develop their skills in the use of questioning and the use of ILT through staff development and sharing of good practice.
- Continue to improve and update learning resources to ensure that they match 'industry standards' and reflect the expectations of industry.
- Review the arrangements for Train to Gain courses, including the qualification aims used and the length of courses, to ensure a better match to learners' and industry needs and to support improved completion of courses within the time allocated.
- Ensure that the self-assessment report is evaluative by avoiding unnecessary description. Use accurate data consistently and ensure comparisons are made with appropriate national rates.

Additional Themes

Inspectors explored the following themes as part of this reinspection.

Outcomes for learners

How much progress has been made in improving outcomes for learners? Reasonable progress

All key performance indicators show an improving trend since the last inspection. College data indicate further improvement in retention rates in the current year. Retention rates are improved considerably on short courses. Retention of current learners, close to the end of the academic year, is markedly higher than the final rate in 2008/09. Qualification success rates have increased notably on Train to Gain courses, although the improvement in completion of qualifications in the time allocated is less strong and the rate remains low. Success rates for apprentices have increased to above average. Attendance rates are similar to 2008/09 and satisfactory.

The college monitors the performance of different groups of learners closely. The gap between adult male lower success rates compared to female adults has closed considerably. Actions are in place to improve 16 to 18 year old success rates for males following some underperformance compared to females in 2008/09. Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities succeed nearly as well as their peers. Inspectors' lesson observations and measures of 'value-added' indicate that learners are making mostly satisfactory progress in their learning. The college recognises the need to collect and analyse data on the impact of its work in order to promote personal and social development and health and well-being.

Leadership and management

How much progress has been made in improving self-assessment and improvement planning? Reasonable progress

As a result of the merger, a comprehensive review of the curriculum at Yorkshire Coast College has taken place. This has involved a review of local and regional needs, a 'course costing exercise' and rationalisation of the curriculum to ensure that entry requirements are appropriate and progression needs are met. Curriculum areas are now part of the faculty structure within the Grimsby Group, with the rigorous faculty course review and performance review process well underway. Course targets are in place. This work underpins the college's approach to strengthening curriculum self-assessment in the current year.

The self-assessment report is comprehensive and realistic. The process included a high level of experienced governors' involvement and external support in the pre-merger moderation process from Grimsby Group staff. Although moderation has been strengthened, the report lacks some rigour. A few of the main strengths identified conflict with corresponding areas for improvement, the report is overly

descriptive in places, particularly at curriculum level, and there is some overstating of strengths. However, the areas for improvement are clearly stated and given appropriate emphasis. Quality improvement plans are detailed, monitored closely and largely effective at curriculum level. Monitoring of the whole college action plan lost some momentum during the merger period but is now being monitored closely.

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