

ANNUAL ASSESSMENT VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Name of College: Hugh Baird College

Date of visit: 6 November 2006

This feedback contains brief findings from the annual assessment visit. It focuses on the themes explored during the visit and does not attempt to give a comprehensive overview of the college's performance.

Achievement and standards

Trends in retention, achievement and success rates in 2006 for both age groups, including key skills

- At the previous inspection, based on college data from 2004-05, learners' achievements were judged to be satisfactory overall. Unvalidated data provided by the college for 2005-06 show an increase of 3% in the overall success rate on long courses for learners aged 16 to 18. The overall success rate for learners aged 19 and over declined slightly but remained above the (04-05) national average. The overall pass rate (for all ages) on long courses increased by 2% and the overall retention rate fell by 1%. Success rates on short courses increased for both age groups. The college is aware that there are low or declining retention rates on a small number of courses and is working to address this.

Average points scores and value added scores on GCE courses in 2006

- Data provided by the college for 2006 show that there was a significant increase both in the points score per entry and the points score per candidate on GCE / VCE courses. Value-added (ALIS) data for GCE / VCE courses in 2006 show improvement in the overall progress made by learners. The progress made in nearly all subjects on GCE / VCE AS courses improved and, overall, learners made at least satisfactory progress. On GCE A-level courses, progress made in many subjects was at least satisfactory. However, in a few, the progress made by learners was below that expected. Data provided by the college from the Green Card value-added target setting system show that in all nine curriculum schools learners have progressed well in relation to the targets set for them on entry.

Work-based learning achievements in 2006

- Data provided by the college show that achievement rates of the full apprenticeship framework rose significantly to 49%, which is well above the college's target and the Greater Merseyside average and around the national average.

Quality of education and training

The teaching of key skills

- On-line assessments have been introduced and work on the embedding of key skills in schemes of work has begun. Support for improvements in the teaching of key skills has been strengthened through whole college and targeted staff development. The key skills success rate rose by 5% to 34% in 2005-06, which met the college's target for 2007-08. Pass rates improved by 7%. Although the success rate is around the national average the college acknowledges that this is low and aspires to increase success rates through the actions outlined above. Ensuring that curriculum areas are supported in integrating literacy and numeracy within schemes of work has been identified by the college as a key priority.

The college's actions to achieve more consistency in the quality of group tutorials

- At the recent inspection, tutorial support had improved but the college had identified some inconsistency in the quality of group tutorials. Appropriate action has been taken to address this which includes detailed schemes of work and opportunities for the sharing of good practice. More observations of tutorial sessions will be carried out with a rigorous system of support where the quality does not meet expectations. Focus groups are used to gather feedback on learners' perceptions of tutorials and it is planned to carry these out earlier in the year to allow adjustments to be made.

Action taken by the college to promote healthy lifestyles

- The college has taken further action to promote healthy lifestyles. Resources have been developed in collaboration with Sefton PCT. Tutorial schemes are now referenced to the five 'Every Child Matters' outcomes and training has been provided for tutors on how they can introduce these themes into their group sessions. Much has been done to promote healthy food options and tutorials cover mental and sexual health. More sport provision is available, but it is too early to demonstrate whether this has led to a greater take-up of physical activity.

Leadership and management

Actions to achieve consistency in curriculum management

- All curriculum areas are judged to be at least satisfactory in the self-assessment report and most are good. Clear criteria have been introduced to allow earlier identification of those courses which are at risk of poor outcomes and performance improvement action plans have been used effectively to support improvements in a small number of courses where the management was identified as weak. Peer review has begun with some other local colleges. In addition, two significant senior management appointments have

been made to support the drive for improvements. The lesson observation scheme and its subsequent support mechanisms continue to be a strong feature of the college.

The approach to quality improvement in work-based learning

- The college has adopted an energetic approach to securing improvements in outcomes in work-based learning. Roles and responsibilities have been reviewed and clarified. Additional timetable time has been allocated for key skills, and summer schools are available for those needing to catch up. New procedures are in place for monthly reviews of individual learners. While achievements in work-based learning are satisfactory, the college is seeking to make further improvements and is committed to challenging improvement targets and to increasing its work-based learning portfolio.

Arrangements for the safeguarding of children and young adults

- In the recent inspection, arrangements for safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults were adequate. The newly revised policy has the support of the local safeguarding board and the college is awaiting confirmation of its endorsement. The college has made good progress on developing a central register of checks carried out on staff and is meeting DfES requirements. Training of key staff has been carried out, and events for the training of all staff are planned. The policy guidelines are clearly stated but there is scope for ensuring a greater understanding of the referral procedures. It has been agreed to have four child protection officers and currently one has been appointed.

Engagement in area 16-19 planning

- This is much improved. A South Sefton Collaborative has now been established in which the college is fully involved. The principal has met with key partners and attends the 14-19 area-wide inspection steering group. The College is taking the lead on a bid for developing specialised diplomas in collaboration with secondary schools. The College has also requested to join the Local Authority led partnership overseeing the potential development of a new sixth form centre. Significant new partnership projects with schools are taking place or are planned; for example the college has secured significant funding to lead on the development of basic skills. A chaplain is being appointed to facilitate closer collaboration between the college and local faith schools and to improve services to learners progressing from them.

Progress on implementing the post-inspection action plan

- The college has a detailed action plan, with appropriate actions outlined to address issues in the inspection report. There is evidence of some impact, for example through the effective implementation of the performance improvement plans to address unsatisfactory performance on a small number of individual courses. Overall, progress

on developing and implementing the plan has been good so far, and the college is monitoring closely its progress against the targets contained within it.