

ANNUAL ASSESSMENT VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Name of College: Tresham Institute of Further and Higher Education

Date of visit: 9 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

How well do learners achieve?

- The overall college success rate improved by 4% between 2002/03 and 2004/05, compared with an increase in the national average of 7% over the same period. In 2004/05 the overall college success rate was 76%. This was significantly above the national average.
- Success rates for 16-18 year olds in 2004/05 were similar to the national averages at levels 1 and 3, but significantly below the national average at level 2. Success rates have improved since 2002/03 by 15%, 5% and 6% at levels 1, 2 and 3 respectively. The overall success rate for 16-18 year olds in 2004/05 was 65% which was significantly below the national average.
- Success rates for adults in 2004/05 were significantly above the national averages at levels 1 and 2, but significantly below the national average at level 3. Success rates have improved since 2002/03 by 7%, 12% and 4% at levels 1, 2 and 3 respectively. The overall success rate for adults in 2004/05 was 81% which was significantly above the national average.
- Value-added and distance travelled indicators suggest that most learners achieve in line with expectations based on their prior attainment.
- Work-based learning data indicates that overall success rates for apprenticeships have improved in recent years and are above the national average. Timely success rates for apprenticeships have also improved and are above the national average.
- At the time of the annual assessment visit in November 2006, around 2% of the qualification outcomes for 2005/06 had yet to be confirmed. However, college data indicates that success rates for 16-18 year olds increased markedly at levels 1 and 2, and to a lesser extent at level 3. The overall success rate for 16-18 year olds will be around 5% higher

than in 2004/05 and is likely to be similar to the national average. Success rates for adults increased markedly at levels 2 and 3, but decreased slightly at level 1. The overall success rate for adults is likely to be similar to that in 2004/05.

- In 2005/06 there was an increase in the proportion of long qualifications taken by learners compared to short qualifications. The overall success rate in 2005/06 was 76%. This figure is similar to that of the previous year and is likely to be broadly similar to the national average.

Quality of education and training

What actions has the college taken to improve the quality of lessons and to extend the use of ILT in teaching and learning? What has been the impact of these actions?

- Since the last inspection in February 2006, the college has taken a number of actions to improve the quality of lessons and to extend the use of ILT to support learning. It is too early to assess fully the impact of many of these actions but some improvement is evident.
- The selection criteria for teaching staff have been amended to include the requirement for a demonstration of presentation skills during interview.
- The teaching and learning tutor handbook has been revised and contains a good range of advice and guidance on effective teaching and learning. Additional briefing materials are issued to staff on a regular basis. These materials have included common weaknesses observed in satisfactory lessons, features of outstanding teaching and learning, and the effective use of differentiation methods in lessons.
- Curriculum audit arrangements have been enhanced and this has contributed to a greater consistency in schemes of work, lesson planning, and the use of an appropriate range of teaching and learning methods. The college has recognised the need to further develop the questioning techniques of some teachers and to promote greater learner participation in lessons.
- Teaching staff participate in a wide range of professional development activities focused on teaching and learning. In addition, small groups of teachers or individuals can access support from subject learning coaches and teaching mentors. Staff whose observed lessons were judged to be outstanding are encouraged to lead on training activities and to share good practice.

- The use of ILT to support learning is promoted in a new teaching and learning handbook. It is also a focus of observations of teaching and learning, and there is evidence of more common use of ILT throughout the college. Much staff development has taken place on using ILT and all full-time staff have a target to produce materials for the college virtual learning environment (VLE). The VLE is new in 2006/07 and at the time of the AAV around one in seven courses had learning materials available on the system.
- The forms used to record the outcomes of observations of teaching and learning have been amended to provide a greater focus on actions for improvement. There is, however, scope for further development of this process to promote quality improvement.
- The college recognises the need to increase the proportion of good or better teaching and learning and has set itself targets for improvement. Feedback from students gathered in summer 2006 indicates improvements in the organisation of courses and the range of activities employed by teachers. There have been too few observations of teaching and learning in 2006/07 to make any clear judgements about whether the provision has improved.

What actions has the college taken to improve individual target setting and progress reviews? What has been the impact of these actions?

- Since the last inspection the college has made adequate progress in improving target-setting and progress reviews.
- Staff have received specific training in target-setting and the management of tutorials. Closer scrutiny has been placed on tutorial performance and it now features in the staff appraisal process. In May 2006 the college created a board of studies for key skills, enrichment and tutorials. This has increased the focus on tutorials in the college.
- The college has not formally identified students at risk of not completing their courses. However, a student mentor has recently been appointed who is developing an 'at risk' monitoring and referral system. Plans for the system are comprehensive and well thought out.
- Recently completed individual learning plans (ILPs) show an improvement in target-setting. Targets are clearer and more challenging. There is, however, room for further improvement. For example, potential barriers to achievement are identified by students at induction but in many cases there is no record of what actions will be carried out to address these barriers. Some targets are clear and

well defined. However, many are very brief, lack clarity and are not always relevant. The quality of action-planning to reach these targets is sometimes weak.

- The arrangements for monitoring tutorials are not sufficiently rigorous. There are no formal arrangements for evaluating tutorials and some tutors have not been observed.

Leadership and management

Does the college have an appropriate accommodation strategy to address any weaknesses? Is the current accommodation appropriately maintained?

- The accommodation strategy to address weaknesses is well thought out and effectively implemented. The main focus is on new buildings and the development in Kettering is nearing completion. The project is well managed and the college is making good use of links with other providers to share good practice. Regular meetings about the development have taken place and teaching staff report a high level involvement at each stage of the project.
- Good plans exist to maximise the efficiency of use of the new development. For example, a joint reception area for health and beauty and the fitness facility is planned to avoid duplication. The design of the building provides many enhanced services to students including those with disabilities.
- Current accommodation is appropriately maintained. The college has a clear plan to maintain and refurbish existing buildings. While appropriate attention is being paid to the new developments, the college has maintained a good focus on meeting the needs of existing students and keeping the existing buildings to a suitable standard.

Has the college continued its good improvements to work-based learning programmes? What is the impact of the improvements?

- The college has maintained its good improvements to work-based learning programmes. The key action has been to locate work-based learning within faculties. Staff report much improved communication links between teachers, assessors and support staff. A better focus on quality control has improved the provision.
- Student recruitment and induction is now carried out by vocational staff. Employer liaison has been improved and the college has established good links with employers to improve the experience of

learners. The tracking of learners' progress has been improved with good use being made of summary progress records to inform all those involved with each learner, including the employers.

- The college has continued to invest in new facilities. For example, the purchase of 6 modern vehicles and new diagnostic testing machines for motor vehicle students.
- One impact of these improvements has been a notable increase in overall and timely success rates for work-based learners. The overall success rates for work-based learners improved from 43% in 2004/05 to 55% in 2005/06.