

## ANNUAL ASSESSMENT VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Name of College: North East Worcestershire College  
Date of visit: 16 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

Data on learners' performance in 2005/06 including in key skills qualifications and work-based learning

- College data available at the time of the visit show that nearly all success rates improved and all were above, and many well above, national averages. Success rates for learners aged 16 – 18 at level 1 and 2 were very high and, at level 3, the rate showed good improvement. Learners aged 19 and over at level 3 have success rates similar to those in 2004/05. Pass rates remained generally very high but retention rates were closer to average, especially for learners aged 19 and over.
- Success rates on key skills qualifications in 2005/06 were well above average and improved compared to 2004/05. Most passes are at level 1 in all three core key skills subjects. Four times as many entries were made for key skills qualifications in 2005/06 compared to the previous year.
- Success rates on work-based learning programmes have improved considerably in all areas since the recent inspection. All rates, including for timeliness, have improved significantly, in some cases from a low base, to above or well above average.

### Attendance and punctuality in 2005/06

- Attendance was judged as satisfactory at the recent inspection. Average attendance given in the self assessment report (SAR) for 2005/06 was 85% which compares favourably with the most recent sector average and is a 1% increase on 2004/05. Electronic registration is being introduced in 2006/07 and all departments will be using this by December 2006. In response to the lateness observed at inspection, actions are in place for 06/07 to tackle poor punctuality. Lateness is measured through lesson observations and teachers are supported to ensure that they deal appropriately with instances where this occurs.

## Quality of education and training

### Actions for improvement in work-based learning provision

- Senior management responsibility for work-based provision has been clarified. Monthly reviews of success rates and an increased focus on the number of out-of-funding learners have raised staff awareness of the importance of timely success rates. The number of out-of-funding learners has significantly reduced. Senior managers review performance in work-based provision rigorously and regularly.
- The college has taken effective steps to improve success rates at department level. It no longer works with a poorly performing subcontractor. Declining recruitment on engineering programmes has been recognised and plans are in place to introduce electrical installation programmes from September 2007 for which an increased demand is expected.

### Actions for improvement in key skills provision

- Many more learners took qualifications in 2005/06 and the college plans to increase accreditation in 2006/07 to cover all those aged 16–18. Initial assessment takes place very promptly meaning that learners can quickly begin key skills work at the appropriate level. Sensible changes have been made to align vocational departments with appropriate awarding bodies. As yet very few learners study for level 3 qualifications even though nearly half of those aged 16 – 18 are on level 3 programmes. Learners new to the college see the value of this aspect of their course but some second year learners are less enthusiastic about key skills work.

## Leadership and management

### The self assessment report for 2005/06

- The 2005/06 SAR was approved by governors in early November. Nearly all grades for the college as a whole are judged to be outstanding and in curriculum areas all grades are at least good and nearly half are graded outstanding. Teaching and learning are judged to be good overall, largely because of a slightly less favourable profile of the quality of lessons compared to the previous year. Analysis shows that grades awarded to lessons taught by part-time and agency teachers, all of whom were observed in 2005/06, were lower than for lessons taught by full-time teachers. An improvement action for 2006/07 is to provide more support

for these teachers. The college has also reduced its use of agency teachers.

- Overall the 2005/06 SAR is highly evaluative and self critical. Judgements are supported by robust evidence. Most judgements have clear reference to impact on the learner. Inspection judged that the information about the quality of teaching and learning was insufficiently detailed in the 2004/05 SAR and in some course reviews. The SAR provides much improved coverage of the quality of teaching and learning but, in a year when the amount of unsatisfactory teaching has increased, it does not provide sufficient evaluation of the features and characteristics of unsatisfactory lessons.