

## ANNUAL ASSESSMENT VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Name of College: West of England School and 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

How robust is the college judgement on learner achievement?

- College evidence demonstrates that learners' progress is satisfactory overall and good in some cases. There are some very good examples of learners developing independence skills, achieving qualifications and progressing to further or higher education, where appropriate. However, there is inconsistency in the way targets are set for learners; some learners are not sufficiently challenged and this affects what they can achieve.

### Quality of education and training

Is the college meeting the needs of all learners, especially those with more complex needs?

- Current provision is satisfactory overall but the college is undergoing a restructure to improve the curriculum it can offer to learners. The creation of a new post 16 structure is intended to provide greater flexibility in putting together a programme of learning to meet individual needs. At the same time, an audit of staff skills is planned. Training is planned for the end of term for all staff to raise their awareness and confidence in dealing with learners with dual sensory loss. Further training to develop staff will take place once the analysis of the skills audit has been undertaken. It is too early to evaluate the impact of these changes.

What developments have taken place in work placements?

- European funding has been obtained to develop the work undertaken with learners in relation to work skills. Useful work has been undertaken on the identification of barriers to employment for visually impaired learners and on methods to overcome those barriers. Vocational profiling has been an

integral part of the project for assisting learners in identifying the skills needed for a particular area of work. The emphasis is clearly on experiential learning through a programme of internal as well as external work experience. The project has also allowed for job coaching support for those learners placed with local employers.

What is the impact of links with external agencies?

- The college has good links with a number of external organisations, which help its learners to access provision at further education colleges and within the wider community. These links include some made with European partners.

Have information technology (IT) resources been improved since the last inspection?

- The college has invested in its IT facilities, which are much improved since the last inspection. However, it has not yet evaluated the impact of this on teaching and learning.

How effectively does the college monitor learner progress?

- All learners have their progress monitored but the way in which this is done is inconsistent across the organisation. There are several different systems for assessing learner needs and setting individual learner plans, against which progress can be monitored. Some of these are detailed and thorough but there is a lack of co-ordination to pull together aspects of a learner's programme and to utilise examples of best practice.

## Leadership and management

Plans are in place to reorganise the provision into a pre and post 16 structure; what impact is this having on learners?

- The college has involved staff, parents and students in its proposals for reorganisation and plans are in place to avoid any disruption to the delivery of learner programmes.

How robust are self-assessment and quality assurance systems?

- Self-assessment continues to be an area for development. The college has satisfactory procedures for observing teaching and learning, both at the

main college and with partner organisations. Work has taken place to help the college benchmark itself against other providers and to identify areas of good practice to inform future developments. However, the self-assessment report is too descriptive and it is not always clear how judgements have been arrived at. The college is introducing a more systematic approach to quality assurance. Policies have been reviewed and rationalised into eight key areas. A draft quality framework is in place and a quality committee has been established with governor involvement. However, it is too early to evaluate the effectiveness of these measures in improving the learner experience.

Is the college up to date with equal opportunity and safeguarding measures?

- The college is making a satisfactory response to equal opportunities and safeguarding measures. Policies are being reviewed and updated, procedures are in place for child and adult protection. New staff do not commence employment until appropriate checks have been undertaken. The college's use of volunteers is on hold while a procedure is formulated for checking their background and suitability. A good range of staff training has taken place to equip staff with up to date equality and diversity awareness. Learners are actively involved in drawing up the college's disability equality scheme.