



City College Norwich

Better
education
and care

Re-inspection report

Audience Post-sixteen	Published April 2007	Provider reference 130764
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Introduction

City College Norwich was inspected in February 2005. Inspectors from the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) and the Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) carried out the inspection under Section 62 of the Learning and Skills Act. The quality of provision was found to be satisfactory or better in all areas inspected, except in Hair & Beauty work-based learning (WBL) and Hospitality Leisure and Travel WBL which were found to be less than satisfactory. Ofsted is responsible for re-inspecting all provision that is less than satisfactory within two years of the original inspection. If inadequate areas of learning or aspects of provision remain inadequate following re-inspection, inspectors will continue to monitor progress at annual assessment visits, but the areas will not be re-graded. They will be re-inspected during the full college inspection.

The less than satisfactory WBL areas were re-inspected on 27 /28 February 2007. The outcomes of the re-inspection are as follows.

WBL Area	Original grade	Re-inspection grade
Hair and Beauty	4	2

Context

Seventy-seven learners are on work-based learning modern apprenticeships. All are from white British backgrounds, four are male, and forty-eight are in their first year. All learners work in salons in and around the city of Norwich. Twenty-two of these employ workplace assessors.

Strengths

- very high and timely success rates for hairdressing apprentices
- much good teaching that actively involves learners
- purposeful leadership and management

Areas for improvement

- insufficient client base within the college salon
- insufficient development and use of computers in lessons

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards are good. At the last inspection, success rates for framework completion in work-based learning were low. This weakness is now a strength. Success rates rose from 10% in 2004/05 to 65% in 2005/06 (almost double the national rate of 34%). Timely success is now at 63%.

Strategies have been implemented to improve the tracking of NVQ progress. Key skills are now front-loaded and are much more effectively integrated into the curriculum. This has improved framework success rates over the last two years. Current learners are progressing very well with 83% due to leave in 2006/07 having already achieved their key skills.

Quality of provision

The quality of teaching and learning has improved and is good. Learners play a more active role in their learning. Study packs allow learners to access essential knowledge in the workplace. Learning resources are satisfactory. The salon is large and well planned. Not all rooms have access to interactive whiteboards and opportunities for teachers to use Information Learning Technology (ILT) are sometimes missed. The client base is insufficient at the times apprentices are in college. Assessment practice is satisfactory. The opportunities for WBL learners to gain assessments in the workplace have increased. Vocational teachers give good one-to-one support and advice in both theory and practical lessons. Progress is thoroughly monitored using a variety of techniques. Practical skills-checks have been introduced for full-time learners but are not yet being used for apprentices.

Leadership and management

The management of work-based learning is good. It has led to marked improvements to provision since the last inspection. Significant improvements to learners' achievements and progress monitoring have been made. There is a strong sense of teamwork and sharing of good practice. Good communications exist between internal teams and workplace trainer/assessors. Systems and documentation are standardised and robust. Salon assessors have access to college based staff development. Employers feel supported; their views are sought and acted upon.

WBL area	Original grade	Re-inspection grade
Hospitality and Catering	4	3

Context

The college offers work-based learning programmes in food preparation and cooking, food and drink service and hotel reception. There are 29 learners on apprenticeship programmes and 7 learners on advanced apprenticeships. They are employed locally by a wide range of hospitality establishments which provide on-the-job training. Most learners attend the college for off-the-job training. The college has a CoVE in hospitality and catering.

Strengths

- significant improvements in apprenticeship framework success rates
- good background theory training
- good resources
- good leadership and management

Areas for improvement

- poor advanced apprenticeships framework success rates
- insufficiently detailed monitoring of learners' progress
- weak target-setting for learners

Achievement and standards

Apprenticeship framework success rates have improved significantly. The overall success rate improved from 19% in 2004/05 to 55% in 2005/06. The timely success rate increased from 14% to 56%. However, there were wide variations in the success rates on the different apprenticeship programmes in 2005/06. In 2006/07 to date, both the overall and timely success rates have continued to improve to 60% at the time of the inspection. Learners now complete their key skills qualifications at an early stage of their programme. Over 90% of the learners who started their apprenticeship in 2006/07 have already achieved their key skills. Success rates for advanced apprentices are poor. In 2005/06, the overall and timely success rates were 17%. The success rate remains less than satisfactory in 2006/07 at 27% to date.

Quality of provision

Theory training for learners is good. Employers and learners value the training at the college highly. Tutors use ILT well in lessons. Resources are good and reflect the needs of industry well. These include high-standard kitchens and restaurants and a well-used reception area. Tutors are very experienced and many have carried out professional updating in industry. The monitoring of learners' progress is insufficiently detailed. Progress reviews do not record the skills gained by learners at college and in the workplace in sufficient detail. Target setting for learners is weak. Employers are not sufficiently involved in target-setting. The college has identified the areas for improvement in progress reviews and target-setting and has started to take actions to rectify these weaknesses.

Leadership and management

Leadership and management are good. Improvements in the quality and performance of the work-based learning programmes are managed effectively through course reviews and regular meetings at all levels of management. Staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities. Management information is used well to monitor the performance of the different programmes and individual learners. The management of key skills has improved significantly

since the previous inspection. Regular standardisation meetings ensure the continuous review of assessment practices and that staff are up-to-date about changes to qualifications.

ANNUAL ASSESSMENT VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Name of College: City College Norwich
Date of visit: 27–28 February 2007

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

What do value-added data indicate about achievements and standards in 2005/06?

- Data for 2005/06 indicate that, overall, students perform in line with expectations. For GCE and National Diploma (ND) provision, data indicate a spread close to the national averages for colleges of this type. Value added data for individual sector subject areas are not significantly different from the national figures. However, the extent to which students on individual courses achieve in line with expectations shows wide variations and a lack of consistency across the college's curriculum. For example, students on GCE A level human biology, geography and history achieved much better than expected in 2005/06. By contrast, those on a number of art courses, politics and drama did not achieve in line with expectations. Similar variations were seen in ND provision. The college has recently changed the accountability and management of GCE arts provision to address these issues, and significant improvements are evident in recent AS results.

Of the six overall success rate indicators for students aged 16-18 and 19+ at levels 1, 2, and 3, three declined in 2004/05 and five are now below the national average for colleges of this type. The SAR indicates some improvements in 2005/06. What does the 2005/06 data indicate?

- Data for 2005/6 indicate consistent improvements. The overall success rate for level 1 provision for students aged 16-18 remained unchanged at 76%, several percent above the national average. All other indicators improved both for students aged 16-18 and those aged over 19. Overall success rate is now 4% above the national average for colleges of this type. Within this, retention has improved steadily over recent years.

Success rates at level 1 showed further improvement in 2004/05. Did this trend continue in 2005/06?

- For students aged 16-18, the overall success rate for level 1 provision remained constant at 76% for the years 2004/05 and 2005/06. For students aged 19 and over, the figure improved from 71% to 76%. Both of the 2005/06 figures are above the national averages for colleges of this type.

The last AAV identified uneven performance in GCE provision. To what extent did this continue in 2005/06?

- Variations in performance in GCE provision continued in 2005/06 though with improvements, especially in AS provision. Overall success rates for this provision have improved since the last inspection. In art and design, where students have not achieved well in the past, pass rates have improved though success rates and high grade achievement were below national averages for many A2 subjects in 2005/06. Improving trends are evident in AS subjects where both pass rates and the proportion of students achieving high grade passes exceeded the national averages for many subjects in 2005/06.

CPR data for 2004/05 indicate a declining proportion of students achieving the highest grades in level 3 provision. For students aged 16-18, this decline was marked for GCE A/A2 courses and significantly below the national figure. A similar picture exists for 'other' provision which includes ND courses. Did this trend continue in 2005/06?

- Overall, the data for 2005/06 indicate improvements to around or just below the national average for high-grade achievement on GCE courses. For students aged 16-18, 27% achieve grades A and B, which is just above the national average for AS, and just below that for A/A2 courses. The achievement of the highest grades for GCSEs is high. For the relatively small proportion of students aged 19+, the numbers of students achieving the highest grades in AS courses has improved and is above the national figure. However for A/A2 courses it has declined and is significantly below the national figure of 2005. The achievement of high grades on the ND provision improved markedly in 2006.

What trends were apparent in the achievement of work-based learners in 2005/6?

- The achievement of work-based learners has improved markedly. All success rates are now significantly higher than the national averages. Timely success rates are approaching the overall success rates for work-based learning

Key skills success rates were low in 2004/05. What happened in 2005/06?

- Overall key skills success rates improved in 2005/06. In many cases they have risen to levels which are significantly above the low national figure. However, the proportion of students who do not achieve key skills is too high.

Quality of education and training

Some aspects of achievement and standards declined in 2004/05, in particular, the proportion of students achieving the highest grades. The SAR indicates issues around action planning, progress, and target setting in a minority of areas. The SAR recognises that stretching the more able learners is an area for development. What measures does the college have to ensure that the most able students are challenged to fulfil their potential?

- The college recognises the need to stretch students further and in particular the most able. A range of measures is in the process of being implemented across the college to address this. For example, it is intended that provision for gifted and talented students, initially those on GCE provision, will be offered from September 2007. In addition, work is in progress to harmonise tutorials and target setting to ensure that both predictive and aspirational targets are made clear to students together with details of what needs to be done to achieve them.

At the last AAV the college's lesson observation system had been changed significantly. Have these changes impacted on the quality of teaching and learning?

Improvements and changes to the lesson observation system have continued. The system is now comprehensive, well-moderated, and well-designed. The

analysis of the data which this system provides is excellent, and is used effectively to inform professional development and aspects of teaching and learning specific to individual departments. Staff have confidence that the system is used for improvement and development processes. Data from the large number of observations indicate that the process is leading to improvement. The proportion of good or better lessons has increased. In addition, the proportion of inadequate lessons has increased slightly, indicating a realistic profile.

How does the college monitor the effectiveness of the support it provides?

- The college routinely gathers information concerning the effectiveness of support. Detailed analyses are made which demonstrate that the support provided is effective in raising standards. Use of such analyses could usefully be extended to evaluate the effectiveness of support within discrete curriculum areas. Subjective evaluations are also made through use of student perception surveys.

The SAR recognises the need to harmonise tutorial practice across the college, though it evaluates support overall as good. What progress is being made to improve tutorial provision and does lesson observation play a part in the process?

- The college correctly recognises that there are weaknesses in tutorial practice and target setting. Although the lesson observation system does allow for the observation of tutorials, few have been observed. The college is introducing changes to improve tutorial practice. Tutors are receiving more professional development in their role. Systems are being changed to make tutorials more effective, for example by the use of electronic ILPs to improve student involvement and accuracy.

Leadership and management

The SAR recognises that some aspects of provision underperform. How effectively does the college challenge underperforming provision?

- The college effectively challenges underperforming provision. Better use of data now ensures timely intervention and monitoring. Sufficient opportunity is given for the improvement of failing provision, however in a number of instances the college has cancelled provision where this

has not happened. In these cases students are given good advice and guidance on alternative provision. Effective arrangements are made to ensure that alternatives are available either within or outside the college.

The SAR states that the sharing of good practice has improved and has been helped by the lesson observation process. How effectively is good practice identified and shared across the college?

- Good practice is effectively identified and shared across the college. The lesson observation system identifies areas for development as well as strengths. This information is used well in college-wide weekly development sessions which allow a variety of developmental activities within individual schools. A range of meetings at all levels is used to identify and disseminate the best practice.

The college evaluates Leadership and Management as good overall with a clear strategic vision and challenging targets for improvement. It identifies inconsistency of practice, systems and processes at course level. How is the college addressing this issue?

- The college has reorganised to provide senior staff with better opportunities to monitor the quality of provision. Arrangements are well focussed on ensuring consistency of practice and processes at course level. The degree to which tutors and course leaders have ownership of the quality of their provision has improved. However, some inconsistencies remain, for example in the use of Individualised Learning Plans target setting for course performance is well developed.

Has the college met its performance targets for 2006?

- The college has set itself challenging performance targets which it has met, and in all cases exceeded. The reorganisation has allowed staff to become more closely involved in the target setting process. The post-inspection action plan is now completed and has been subsumed into the annual quality process.