



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE



RE-INSPECTION OF BARNESLEY COLLEGE

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Outcome of Re-Inspection

The overall provision in the work-based learning (WBL) area of construction is now **satisfactory**.

The overall provision in the WBL area of engineering is now **satisfactory**.

The overall provision in the curriculum area of health and social care is now **satisfactory**.

The overall provision in the curriculum area of literacy and numeracy is **now satisfactory**.

Background

Barnsley College was inspected in March 2003. 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 WBL construction, WBL engineering, and health and social care, which were found to be unsatisfactory; and literacy and numeracy, which was found to be very poor.

Ofsted and the ALI have particular duties in relation to colleges where their inspection report indicates that individual curriculum and/or work-based learning (WBL) areas are unsatisfactory or very weak or that leadership and management are unsatisfactory or very weak. Where a college has been judged to have less than satisfactory leadership and management, or less than satisfactory provision in solely WBL, inspectors from Ofsted or the ALI will visit the college to carry out monitoring inspections of the less than satisfactory areas. As a result of the re-inspection monitoring visits, inspectors may judge that previously less than satisfactory areas of provision, or leadership and management, are now satisfactory and that no further visits are required. Where leadership and management are satisfactory, but there is curriculum provision that is less than satisfactory, there will be no monitoring visits. All less than satisfactory provision will be re-inspected, normally during one week, within two years of the original inspection.

If, after approximately 24 months, the college has not made sufficient progress to justify a judgment that the curriculum or WBL area or leadership and management are satisfactory, the original grade for the area that continues to be unsatisfactory will remain on the college's record until the next full inspection within the cycle. Ofsted will inform the local LSC that provision remains unsatisfactory and the reasons why.

Date of the Re-Inspection

In accordance with the above procedures, the re-inspection of WBL construction, WBL engineering, health and social care, and literacy and numeracy took place during the week of 7-11 March 2005.

WBL construction

In the March 2003 inspection, the quality of overall provision in construction overall was judged to be satisfactory. However, the work-based learning aspect of this provision was judged unsatisfactory. This re-inspection was confined to the work-based provision. The following overall strengths and weaknesses were identified in the inspection report:

Strengths

- high retention and pass rates on many courses

- high standard of students' portfolios

- good learning resources

- good monitoring of students' progress at the college

- broad range of programmes

- good self-assessment and curriculum management.

Weaknesses

- unsatisfactory work-based arrangements

- much uninspiring teaching

- unsystematic arrangements to help students with literacy and numeracy

- insufficient use of management information

- disruptive effect of students' lateness for lessons.

Following the re-inspection, inspectors judged that progress has been made in addressing the above weaknesses. The overall provision in this area is now **satisfactory**.

Since the inspection in March 2003, the college has re-organised and improved its work-based learning provision, and there has been a transfer of staff and learners from another major work-based provider. These new arrangements became fully effective in January 2004. A new work-based learning manager and team have been appointed. Within construction and engineering, a senior assessor works with seven assessor / reviewers to monitor progress and meet completion targets. In February 2004, the college purchased a management information system dedicated to work-based learning. The software is capable of monitoring all aspects of work-based learning. An assessor handbook has been introduced to help staff fully understand their roles. All assessors, including those based in the college, are updating their qualifications. Of 30 staff, 28 have recently undertaken the industry standard health and safety test. The successful completion of this test will ensure access to all construction sites for staff.

The management of work-based learning has been strengthened. Occupationally competent assessors / reviewers have been appointed. Additionally, an induction officer and three full-time staff now work on induction, management information and administrative support.

All work-based learners are now very clear about the content of their frameworks. The individual learning plan has been redesigned and includes an NVQ tracking sheet. Each assessor ensures that their named learner has clear progression targets. Teachers and assessors work with employers to develop their knowledge of the requirements of modern apprenticeship frameworks. Key skills are delivered from the outset.

All learners are now assessed at induction. The basic skills teams work with the key skills teacher and curriculum staff to support the needs of the individual. A good start has been made on integrating numeracy and literacy support into the learners' programmes.

There is now better use of management information. There are three full-time staff dedicated to maintaining the work-based management information system (MIS). All learners have a named assessor and a co-ordinator tutor. All assessors have completion targets for individual learners and the performance against these targets is reviewed regularly. The MIS can currently track individual performance against most aspects of the framework.

More frameworks are being achieved than in 2003, but the figure is still significantly below national averages. The difficulty in recruiting a plumbing assessor explains some of the slow progress towards framework completions: plumbers make up the major proportion of work-based learners in construction. However, there has been progress against elements of the framework. For example, key skills are now delivered early in the learners' programmes and achievements have improved. Technical certificate achievement is currently 80%. Prior to March 2003, 74% of all learners left without any qualification. This has been reduced to approximately 26%.

WBL Engineering

In the March 2003 inspection, the quality of the overall provision in engineering was judged to be satisfactory. However, the work-based learning aspect of this provision was judged unsatisfactory. This re-inspection was confined to the work-based provision. The following overall strengths and weaknesses were identified in the inspection report:

Strengths

- high retention rates on most programmes
- very high pass rates on some level 3 programmes
- effective action to design courses in response to students' and employers' feedback
- good induction programmes for work-based learners.

Weaknesses

- slow progress of work-based learners
- poor teaching of key skills
- inadequate reviews of work-based learners' progress
- unsatisfactory internal verification processes on work-based learning programmes
- inadequate checks on students' understanding in many theory lessons.

Following the re-inspection, inspectors judged that progress has been made in addressing the above weaknesses. The overall provision in this area is now **satisfactory**.

The rate of achievement of full apprenticeship frameworks has improved. The rate remains below the national average, but the trend is upward. In the first seven months of 2004/05, more frameworks had been achieved than in the three years before the inspection. Far fewer learners are leaving without achieving any qualification, but failure to meet the key skills requirements of the framework remains a problem. Particular efforts are being made to help learners who are near the end of, or have exceeded, their funded period, to pass their key skills qualifications and hence achieve a full framework.

Specialist engineering assessor / reviewers have been appointed. Reviewers now consider progress on previous targets and all aspects of the learner's framework. From this review, learners

understand what they have achieved and what is still to be done. Clear short- and medium-term targets are set for the period until the next review. The progress achieved, and targets set, are discussed with supervisors, who also record their view of the learner's performance in the workplace.

At the time of the inspection, there was little internal verification of assessment processes. Internal verification of learners' portfolios now takes place to a monthly schedule by qualified verifiers. Verifiers also regularly check records of assessments that take place in the workplace, and accompany assessors to workplace assessments in order to observe the procedure directly.

Health and social care

In the March 2003 inspection, the quality of overall provision in this area was judged to be unsatisfactory. The following strengths and weaknesses were identified in the inspection report:

Strengths

- good teaching on courses for adult students
- good learning resources
- good management of workplace practices
- high retention rates on BTEC and GNVQ intermediate courses.

Weaknesses

- some unsatisfactory teaching on courses for students aged 16 to 18
- low retention rates on GNVQ advanced/AVCE health and social care courses
- low pass rates on CACHE and GNVQ intermediate health and social care courses
- insufficient feedback to students to inform them of their progress
- insufficient monitoring of course teams' implementation of quality assurance.

Following the re-inspection, inspectors judged that progress has been made in addressing the above weaknesses. The overall provision in this area is now **satisfactory**.

Pass rates in 2004 were very high on the GNVQ intermediate and AVCE courses in health and social care and on the certificate and diploma courses in childcare and education. However, pass rates were below the national average on the access course in health studies and the foundation award in caring for children. The pass rate on the GNVQ intermediate health and social care course has been at or above the national average for the past three years.

Retention rates have significantly improved on many courses. Attendance at lessons is high and punctuality is good. Retention in 2004 on the AVCE course in health and social care was very poor. However, this course is in its final year and the current in-year retention rate is high, as is that for its replacement, the national certificate in health and social care. The part-time access course in health studies and nursing and the diploma in childcare and education also had low retention rates in 2004, but the current in-year rates are high.

Teaching on courses for students aged 16 to 18 has improved considerably and is now a strength. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed, and the overall profile for teaching and learning was above the national average. Much of the teaching was lively and challenging and sustained students' concentration and motivation. Classroom management was sound. Teachers used a variety of effective strategies to reflect students' different learning styles. In some lessons, however, teachers did not sufficiently check and reinforce students' learning.

Tutors use tighter and more rigorous action planning and progress review systems to ensure that students are aware of their progress towards achieving their qualifications. Students' assessed work is marked promptly and contains constructive comments on how they might improve their grades.

Leadership and management are now good. Managers have a clear vision of the future direction of the curriculum. They involve staff in planning the actions needed. Development days on sharing good practice and exploring ways to improve the quality of students' experience are highly valued by staff. Quality assurance has been strengthened. Course teams are more critical in their self-assessment reports and pay greater attention to students' views. Management files are well organized and comprehensive. New staff are well supported by a mentor and have structured and regular reviews of progress.

Literacy and numeracy

In the March 2003 inspection, the quality of overall provision in this area was judged to be very poor. The following strengths and weaknesses were identified in the inspection report:

Strengths

- successful initiatives to widen participation
- good personal support for students
- good accommodation for workshop provision.

Weaknesses

- much poor teaching
- inadequate initial assessment
- weak target setting and lack of systematic progress reviews
- inadequate monitoring of learning support provision
- very low uptake of learning support
- ineffective quality assurance procedures.

Standards of teaching have improved and the majority of lessons are satisfactory or better. Planning is effective, resulting in some good lessons. A variety of teaching methods is used, supported by a range of resource materials. Where teaching is most effective, the individual needs of the student are met and there are clear learning objectives. Activities are varied and interesting. However, there is a lack of consistency and some unsatisfactory teaching and learning remain. In such lessons, teaching is dull and uninspiring and fails to meet students' needs. Lesson content is determined mainly by assignments and test preparation; learning is superficial; and the underpinning basic skills' needs of the individual are left unmet.

Initial and diagnostic assessment procedures have improved and are now satisfactory. In the better lessons, the results of assessment are used to inform students' individual learning plans. Teachers work to the basic skills needs of the students and keep accurate and detailed records. This informs review procedures and allows teacher and student to establish clear new targets. However, some teachers fail to interpret and apply assessment information correctly and this results in unsatisfactory target setting: the learning plans are incomplete and little use is made of them to review and monitor progress.

Significant improvements have been made in the monitoring of learning support in several of the vocational areas. In these areas, there is now effective liaison between support and vocational staff. Prompt action is taken if students are not attending. These links are improving both achievement and retention on students' main courses.

Take-up of learning support by those students identified with a basic skill need has improved, with 83% of those identified as needing support receiving it. The support is available to students in various ways, including one-to-one, team teaching and embedded support. The most effective learning support is having a positive impact on achievement within the programmes that have been targeted.

Quality assurance systems have been strengthened. There is clear evidence that improvement strategies are beginning to have a positive effect. There are effective systems to support teachers identified as weak.

There will be no further re-inspection of the college because there are no remaining unsatisfactory areas.

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