

## ANNUAL ASSESSMENT VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Name of College: Loughborough College

Date of visit: 9 May 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

At the last annual assessment visit (AAV), work based learning (WBL) completion rates in hair and beauty therapy, childcare and business administration were low and success rates in childcare and business administration were low. Have these improved in 2005/06? How successful is the Train to Gain provision?

- The college has taken appropriate actions to address issues in work-based learning. It now concentrates on engineering and hairdressing only. Provision in childcare and accounting has been phased out and just 3 learners remain in business administration.
- In hairdressing there were no successful completions at the advanced apprenticeship level in the last two years. The college suspended enrolments for a year until actions to improve quality could be embedded. Success rates for apprentices have improved significantly in 2005/06, from a very weak position in the previous year. Overall success rates for apprentices are above the national average. College data suggest that this will rise to well above the national average in 2006/07. Furthermore, the college is making very good progress in ensuring that learners complete within the planned time period.
- In engineering, the good overall and timely success rates for advanced apprentices in 2004/05 were not maintained in 2005/06, as a consequence of retention issues in an earlier year. By contrast, success rates for apprentices rose significantly in 2005/06, and are now in line with the national average. College data for 2006/07 indicate that timely success rates at both levels will exceed the national averages.
- The college has a contract to enrol 408 Train to Gain learners to take NVQs at level 2, and 71 basic skills learners, across five counties and several occupational areas. Managers have overcome the initial difficulties concerning the effectiveness of brokerage arrangements by engaging five brokerage organisations. Enrolments have improved. The college expects to meet its target for NVQ enrolments but it will not meet its basic skills target. Managers have made appropriate appointments to establish a

support infrastructure for Train to Gain. They have developed a specialist area, library and information studies, to good effect in meeting the needs of one large employer. It is too early to judge the success of those learners who are on the Train to Gain programme.

The progress learners make on BTEC national diploma qualifications compared with their prior attainment (value-added) is high. Why is this not the case for learners on BTEC national award and national certificate courses? Value-added scores are high on the BTEC national diploma course in leisure, travel and tourism (LT&T). Why are value-added scores low in sector subject areas (SSAs) 8 and 15 on GCE A level, BTEC national award and BTEC national certificate courses?

- The learners on the national certificate course do the course as part of an advanced apprenticeship and their main aim in the past was just to pass the qualification. Course staff have improved target setting to motivate these learners to achieve at higher grades.
- The national award consists of sports learners whose entry grades are between those needed for the first and the national diplomas. The more able learners do well and following a bridging course at the end of the first year progress to the second year of the national diploma. However, the others struggle with the course and do not progress at the rate expected. Course staff have improved support and motivation and raised entry criteria.
- The value added measure for learners on the GCE A-level sport course (SSA 8) is low. Managers have withdrawn this provision from September 2007.
- The value added measure on the GCE A-level business (SSA 15) course is very low and it is low on the GCE AS business course. Success rates are also low. Staff have improved the order and manner of delivery and have concentrated on target setting and monitoring. Learners achieved well in their January 2007 examinations.

Although overall success rates have risen in 2005/06, the following success rates were low. Why is this and what has been done to raise them? Have these actions been effective? Information communication technology (ICT) overall long (51.8%) and long level 2 (39.7%), arts media and publishing (AM&P) long level 1 (49%) and construction long level 2 (49%).

- The issues concerning ICT provision are covered under leadership and management's first point below.

- The course causing concern in the AM&P area was the OCN music provision and this has been discontinued. This area is now under new management and new BTEC courses run at first and national levels.
- The course in construction was the C&G 2360 electrical installation course for part-time learners. This course has also been replaced.

At the last AAV, there were concerns regarding the low retention rate on the CACHE diploma course and it has declined further to 64%. What has been done to address this concern and to what extent have actions been successful regarding in-year retention in 2006/07?

- The CACHE course did have a low retention rate, but high pass and value added rates. The course team has concentrated on improving teaching and learning, has acted on feedback from learners and has improved target setting. Current retention rates for year 1 and year 2 are 91% and 90% respectively.

Concerns were expressed at the last report and the last AAV, regarding low key skills pass rates. Have level 3 key skills pass rates improved? What will be the impact of the two curriculum pathways (higher education [HE] and employment) on level 3 key skills pass rates?

- Overall success rates for key skills have risen over the last three years and are now at 42% for learners of all ages. The success rates at level 3 were very low in 2005/06. The number of learners at level 3 has fallen significantly, from 314 in 2003/04 to 72 in 2005/06. The college is devising key skills' pathways at level 3 for higher education, employment and 'gap year' in order to make the provision more attractive to learners. Much work has been done to identify successful strategies up to level 2 and to provide appropriate professional development for staff. It is too early to judge how successful the strategy for level 3 will be.

## Quality of education and training

Why are teaching and learning self-assessed as good, if the 2005/06 profile appears to be similar to that of the last inspection and to national averages? Were all teachers observed in 2005/06? Is the teacher improvement programme ('TIPS') successful? What is the latest 2006/07 profile? Why were attendance and punctuality areas of concern? What has been done to improve attendance and punctuality? Have these actions been successful in 2006/07?

- Managers self-assessed teaching and learning as good because the proportion of good or better lesson observation grades was much higher than the proportion of satisfactory observation grades. They consider the new internal lesson observation system to be more rigorous. In 2006/07, the internal lesson observation profile has improved to 71% good or better lessons, 27% satisfactory and 2% inadequate. The inadequate provision has been reobserved and judged satisfactory. About a third of teachers was observed in 2005/06. In 2006/07, observers have completed 219 observations against the target of 265 which they expect to complete before the end of the year.
- 'TIPS' is the teacher improvement programme and is in its second year of workshops. Managers note generic areas for improvement from the lesson observation outcomes and teachers competent in these areas deliver training in the workshops. Manager direct teachers to attend relevant workshops.
- Managers noted in the 2005/06 observations that attendance (at 76%) was an issue of concern and raised the importance of high attendance with course teams and with learners. They have introduced an electronic registration system so that they can monitor attendance and punctuality more rigorously and this feeds into the learner tracking database. Attendance is now 88%.

## Leadership and management

At the last AAV, computing was a cause for concern. In the latest self-assessment report (SAR), it is still self-assessed as inadequate. What actions have been taken to improve computing provision? Have they been effective?

- Actions taken in 2005/06, which were reported in the findings of the last AAV, have not proved to be effective and the area is again assessed by the college as being inadequate. Managers have reviewed the provision and have made key decisions about its future. The self-assessment report identified low retention rates as a main area for improvement. Although success rates rose by 9% in 2005/06, they remain below the national average. The in-year retention rates recorded at the time of the last AAV were artificially high because of the unsatisfactory recording of withdrawals. This has now been addressed. Data supplied by the college for 2006/07 show that in-year retention has improved to around 95%.
- There are particular concerns about the iPRO course. The course does not provide a sufficient work-based element to enable learners to achieve well. Internal reviews of the whole computing area indicate that teaching and learning are broadly satisfactory. The proportion of teaching which is

good or better is insufficient. Learners feel well supported but they do not find the courses sufficiently interesting or stimulating.

- Because previous actions to improve the provision had insufficient impact the college decided to reorganise the provision for the forthcoming academic year. The GCE A/AS subjects will move into the main GCE A level area and most of the other provision will move into the art, design and media area, with the expectation that the good practice which already exists in the e-media courses will be transferred to the computing provision. A new course team leader will be appointed, and other staff will receive further professional development. It is too early to judge whether these actions will prove to be more effective than earlier actions to improve the computing provision.

What progress has been made since the last AAV with the rebuilding programme? At what stage is the world class building proposal for complete redevelopment?

- Good progress has been made in the completion of phase 1a of the current building programme. Newly built specialist facilities for hair, beauty, hospitality, sport, exercise and fitness provide learners with high quality accommodation and resources. This phase was completed on time. The second phase (1b), a new technology centre which will replace engineering facilities, is running a few weeks behind schedule. It will open in the autumn 2007.
- The college is currently working towards submitting an 'application in principle' to embark upon a major building programme. If successful, this would involve phases 2, 3 and 4, with a planned completion by September 2012. The college has set out a clear vision for its estate which will provide 'world class' buildings which will be welcoming and inspiring. Architects are currently being appointed. More detailed planning will ensue, following the appointment of a director of curriculum in the near future.

Does the college participate in 13/14-19 local, area and regional partnerships? If so, what benefits have accrued to young people in the last three years as a result of these partnerships?

- College staff are involved in a wide range of partnerships relating to pre-16 and post-16 matters, including vocational course tasters for learners from local schools in Year 9. Participation, retention and pass rates on courses for learners aged 14-16 have improved in the last three years and nearly 450 learners started on these courses in 2006/07. The provision covers vocational courses at entry level and levels 1 and 2 and work-based learning.

- The application for the new specialised diplomas was unsuccessful, but the group responsible for the bid has made good progress with collaborative timetabling for minority GCE A level subjects.
- College managers have improved relationships with schools in the last three years. Learners in the area benefit from the 'LeCAP' electronic prospectus and application systems. This links to the college's electronic progress file and individual learning plan. Managers have been involved in collaborative level 1 provision and in easing transition between Years 9 and 10 and years 11 and 12.

Has the college done all it can reasonably do to ensure the safeguarding of young people and vulnerable adults? Does a current list exist containing checks of identity, qualifications and criminal records? Has continued professional development (CPD) been done with all staff and governors on the child protection act (CPA)?

- The college has taken reasonable steps to ensure it complies with the requirements regarding safeguarding. It has a current single central recruitment and vetting record of staff. Three managers are nominated persons for child protection matters and the college has good links with relevant external agencies, especially Barnado's and the NSPCC.
- Managers update governors annually on child protection issues and one governor has a designated responsibility for child protection. Although the induction process for new staff contains training on child protection, not all sessional staff have received such training. Managers completed a detailed and comprehensive internal review of 'staying safe' and a clear review details the progress made.