

## MONITORING VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Name of college: East Riding College

Date of visit: 6 May 2008

### Context

East Riding College is a general further education college formed by the merger of Beverley and East Yorkshire colleges in March 2002. The college has main centres at Beverley and Bridlington. It has smaller centres at Carnaby, offering engineering and construction programmes and in Hull offering Trade Union studies and music programmes. The college offers vocational and general education programmes ranging from foundation level to higher education in 14 sector subject areas funded by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). Currently in 2007/08, 1,136 learners aged 16-18 years are enrolled mainly on full-time courses, 2,809 adult learners are on mainly part-time courses with an additional 135 work-based learners. The college is a member of a Train to Gain consortia with two other colleges. It delivers vocational qualifications to around 300 school pupils through the Increased Flexibility Programme.

### Achievement and standards

What progress has been made to improve under performing courses, in particular overall and timely success rates for level 3 learners aged 16-18 and in work-based learning?	Reasonable progress
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At the previous inspection, achievement and standards of learners' work were satisfactory. For learners aged 16 to 18, the success rates at level 3 were low. Since the previous inspection the college has instigated a number of effective strategies to improve success rates in underperforming areas. The college has reviewed its provision to offer a more appropriate selection of level 3 courses to better meet learners' needs. At level 3 for learners aged 16-18, success rates improved slightly in 2006/07 to 63% which were broadly in line with sector averages. Currently, the college is confidently predicting that success rates for this group will be at least 71% in 2007/08. However, it is too early to judge the accuracy of these predictions. Success rates for adults remain good and generally above sector averages at all levels.

Success rates for work-based learners were identified as satisfactory at the previous inspection. Their overall success rates have improved and are now above national averages in 2006/07. Timely success rates are good on advanced apprenticeship

programmes but poor on apprenticeship programmes. Initiatives to improve timely success rates for apprentices include more accurately predicting the length of stay for individual learners based on their entry qualifications, and greater responsibility at curriculum level for monitoring progress and performance against targets. In 2006/07, overall timely success rates improved by approximately 20% but remained below sector averages. Current rates show a potential improvement in 2007/08 to 45% for apprentices which if achieved, will be broadly in line with the sector.

Overall retention rates continue to improve. The retention rates on long programmes were 75% in 2005/06 and have increased to 80% in 2006/07. Very effective monitoring of student performance and attendance has led to tutors being able to intervene promptly to help learners stay on programme and achieve their qualification aims. A pilot programme using value added and distance travelled measures helps tutors plan appropriate support for learners at the start of their course. Attendance continues to be high at 87%.

What progress has been made to ensure positive success rates for school pupils aged 14-16 and Train to Gain adult provision?	Reasonable progress
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At the previous inspection, provision for students aged 14 to 16 was good and the college has maintained this standard. The college continues to provide a range of learning programmes for school pupils through links with schools. Success rates are good, and many pupils achieve a level 1 qualification. In 2006/07, progression rates into further training or work was good at 87%.

Success rates for Train to Gain are satisfactory. The college started Train to gain provision in January 2007 as part of a consortium with two other colleges. In-year success rates are 67% to date and if all current learners are successful could rise to 75% which is broadly in line with sector averages.

#### Quality of provision

What progress has been made to improve the insufficient challenge in a minority of sessions and the sharing of best practice?	Significant progress
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Teaching and learning were identified as good at the previous inspection, but in a few lessons teaching was less effective, insufficiently challenging and activities did not meet the individual needs of learners. Since then a number of effective changes have been introduced to improve teaching and learning. The college has a clear strategy to improve its provision, with a particular focus on developing good provision to become outstanding. Teachers are required to achieve at least a good grade in their lesson observations each year. Those that do not achieve this receive ongoing training and a further lesson observation. An 'observation window' has been introduced to ensure that observations are carried out over a period of time rather than a specified date so that observers can make a more objective assessment of the quality of teaching. Internal inspections are carried out twice a year in partnership

with local colleges in at least two sector subject areas to provide a detailed overview of the provision. A voluntary peer observation scheme, introduced in September 2007 is successful in sharing best practice. The process will be a mandatory requirement for all staff from September 2008. The college prioritises staff development which includes full compliance with the new regulation for acquiring mandatory teaching qualifications, registration with the Institute for Learning and continued professional development. All sector subject areas have teaching and learning mentors to help support new staff to complete the required teaching qualifications.

What progress has been made to further develop the virtual learning environment to support learning?	Reasonable progress
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While some sector subject areas provide a good range of useful information for learners on the virtual learning environment, others remain under developed. The college places good emphasis on improving teachers' information technology skills. Two e-learning co-ordinators are supporting staff well in the use of information learning technology in teaching and in developing the virtual learning environment. Some good training materials have helped staff use information learning technology well in planning lessons to provide a range of activities to meet learners' differing ability levels.

What progress has been made in the engagement of employers and other partners?	Reasonable progress
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The college has maintained the strong links with schools employers and community partners identified as a strength at the previous inspection. Effective quality assurance arrangements are in place to monitor and evaluate partnership arrangements. Extensive school partnerships are in place. Most sector subject areas maintain effective links with employers. Obtaining useful feedback from employers remains a challenge for the college, as the response rate of the twice yearly surveys remains low at 30%. Recent changes include developing employer advisory groups in engineering, hospitality and hairdressing, which are generally well attended. The development of 14-19 diplomas in construction; social health and development; business administration; hair dressing and beauty therapy; hospitality; and engineering, require the college to further engage with employers to ensure effective delivery of the work related curriculum. The college offers five foundation degrees and is in the process of developing a number of others in partnership with the University of Hull, requiring extensive input from employers. Bespoke programmes are developed by the college for employers, community and voluntary groups. Feedback indicates these courses are well received.

What progress has been made in improving advice and guidance for those learners who are seeking employment?	Reasonable progress
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At the previous inspection advice and guidance was good, however progression advice for learners seeking employment was under-developed. Since then reasonable

progress has been made. A number of new initiatives have been in place since September 2007. Themed events have been held which focus on *Every Child Matters* outcomes and are linked to local employment opportunities. Vocational tutors follow up these employment opportunities' in tutorials. All learners complete a next steps form at the end of their programme. Learners indicating that they wish to seek employment are offered an individual interview. In the current year, 188 learners participated in employability skills courses which covered such topics as preparing curriculum vitae, making contact with employers and interview skills. Learners give positive feedback on how the sessions have helped build their confidence in seeking employment. These sessions will be offered to all full-time learners from September 2008.

Has work related enrichment improved since the previous inspection?	Reasonable progress
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Since the previous inspection the college has improved the range of work-based activities. They have established a minimum learner entitlement of 15 days enrichment and work related enrichment. Vocational sector subject areas are working hard with employers to ensure that learners' experience in the work place is positive. A college working group has been established and is in the process of setting key performance indicators to measure progress and success.

#### Leadership and management

How thorough, accurate and inclusive is the self-assessment process?	Significant progress
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The previous inspection identified the self-assessment process as thorough, largely accurate and helpful to the college in driving up standards. Significant progress has been made in further improving self-assessment. The self-assessment process is thorough, critical and the report gives a thorough evaluation of the college's provision. The college has a clear understanding of its strengths and areas for improvement. Individual sector subject areas use and accurately evaluate a wealth of data to evidence the judgements in their reports. Learners' views are well considered. Some of the descriptors used for grade 1 aspects of provision do not reflect the grade. The college has usefully mapped its provision and performance against the LSC's framework for excellence. The report is thoroughly moderated by both internal quality groups and by staff from other institutions. The development plan sets clear improvement actions and challenging targets and is regularly monitored.