

Carlisle College

Carlisle College is a small general further education college in North Cumbria offering largely vocational programmes across 11 subject areas and a small programme of higher education courses. Awarded a Grade 2 overall, following Ofsted inspection in December 2009, Carlisle currently has around 5,000 students including both full- and part-time learners. Examination pass rates and the retention rates of learners on courses, have risen significantly in recent years, particularly on foundation level courses and for adults on advanced courses. Of the 210 staff employed full-time, 138 are teaching staff, eight are Curriculum Managers and 13 Support Area Managers.

Staff development has a high priority at this college and all employees are encouraged to take opportunities which will enhance their professional competence and ultimately contribute to college achievements. The experience of the learner is at the centre of the performance management system and the college is committed to continuing improvement. A staff development conference was held in December 2010 and will be repeated in July 2011 where staff were offered workshops in 17 different subject areas facilitated by both internal staff and external bodies. Carlisle College has a number of potential plans for expansion of provision and use of resources which may require a re-assessment of staff development and a re-evaluation of their current management development programme.

Responsibility for management development is an integral part of the Quality Improvement programme through strategic plans which underpin continuous professional development (CPD), legislative requirements and development needs identified through a comprehensive self assessment process. All managers are required to attend a performance management training day and three Management Conference days annually. As part of the college commitment to succession planning, participation on an Aspiring Managers Programme was offered in 2010 to all staff across academic and support areas who believe they have the skills and potential to become effective managers and whose application was supported by their line manager. The main objective of the programme, which will begin in January 2011 and finish in March 2011 is to focus on understanding the experience and skills needed to manage others within the context of the College. The programme will balance core theory with practical activity and ensure that participants are encouraged to apply the learning to their own circumstances and challenges. A robust evaluation has been integrated into this programme and there are also plans for an assessment of its impact in the short/medium term

Managers are actively encouraged to develop skills and knowledge through links with other colleges. Carlisle is a member of the Cumbrian College Forum and the North West College consortium group affording staff opportunities to liaise with individuals in other establishments to share practice, exchange ideas and management techniques. The decisions of the Senior management team are underscored by the use of robust data and information from middle and junior managers on both college finances and learners' outcomes and also benefit from the ongoing interest and involvement of college Governors.