

**Provider Type**

General Further Education College

**Summary of how the case study can be used**

This case study demonstrates a provider who has achieved Grade 1 Capacity to Improve since their last inspection.

**Background and context**

**Date of Last Inspection:** November 2007

**Summary of grades awarded at the Inspection**

- Effectiveness of provision – Good: Grade 2
- Capacity to improve – Outstanding: Grade 1
- Achievement and standards – Good: Grade 2
- Quality of provision – Good: Grade 2
- Leadership and management – Good: Grade 2
- Equality of opportunity – Good: Contributory Grade 2

**Context of the College**

The college is a large general further education college (GFE. In March 2002, four local colleges merged to form the college.

Some 19% of learners aged 16 to 18 and 16% of adult learners were from minority ethnic groups. The college has 298 learners aged 14 to 16, 648 work-based learners and 263 Train to Gain learners.

*Ofsted Inspection Report 2008*

**The college’s approach to quality improvement**

- A large college where quality improvement processes and procedures are clearly structured throughout the organisation based on a range of key performance indicators central to the college’s improvement
- the areas for improvement indicated in the last inspection formed a clear agenda for change. Inspectors found that all areas for improvement have been addressed
- managers monitor action plans closely to ensure their effectiveness. The impact of these actions is systematically assessed and recorded
- subject managers and staff make good use of management information for planning – good trust in quality of data
- regular monitoring of student attendance and punctuality with rewards for excellent performance and immediate actions where performance is below minimum acceptable level.

**Processes used to enable quality improvement**

- Clarity of message from senior management ‘Where we were was not good enough’
- there is recognition throughout the college that data is accurate, readily available and informs decision making
- managers at all levels have a focus on raising standards and success rates of learners
- systematic analysis of ‘stakeholders views’ – students, employers, parents. Comprehensive college-wide analysis and action planning. Drive for 100% return on student surveys
- the college’s meetings/monitoring/reporting structure has clearly defined arrangements at all levels.

**Resources/information and tools used**

- Comprehensive management information system built around reporting and actioning of key performance indicators
- despite the college being large and on multi-sites there are excellent communication systems. The ‘on-line’ principal’s message board enables staff to communicate directly with the principal and to share responses with all staff – if appropriate
- the identification of Quality Practitioners associated with each of the four broad areas of learning form an effective link between teachers in each area and MIS
- managers use monthly reviews well to ensure that areas for improvement are identified at an early stage and prompt actions are taken to resolve them.

**How improvement has been integrated across the organisation**

- High quality learning materials are shared through the college moodle (an online document storage system)
- regular ‘all staff’ development days focus on ‘priority areas’ together with ‘sharing of best practice’
- governors systematically review their own performance and seek ways of improving it
- learners’ motivation on full-time courses is enhanced through the development of an innovative range of enrichment activities
- there are a wide range of highly effective ‘cross-college’ initiatives to widen participation from under-represented groups.

**Links with development planning**

- The college has developed an ambitious plan to develop facilities of the highest quality. Staff are actively involved in the design of facilities
- the college has developed an extensive range of local, regional and national partnerships with employers
- provision includes a substantial programme for work-based learners and learners aged 14 to 16.

**The effectiveness of the steps taken by the college to promote improvement since the last inspection – Ofsted**

- Overall success rates have increased very substantially from a low to a high level
- provision has improved very significantly from mostly satisfactory, with some unsatisfactory areas, to good with some outstanding aspects
- governors, principal, managers and staff focus very effectively on raising standards for learners. Good quality assurance arrangements are very effective in bringing about substantial improvements
- staff use the very good quality management information well
- the college is in a good financial position and managers deploy resources well to improve standards
- rigorous self assessment processes, well supported by data, lead to particularly effective actions for improvement
- the judgements in the comprehensive self assessment report are accurate and match closely those made by inspectors.

*Ofsted Inspection Report 2008*

**Analysis and evaluation of evidence which indicates an outstanding capacity to improve**

- Actions to improve success rates have been particularly effective
- key skills success rates in 2006/07 were high and increased considerably between 2004/05 and 2006/07
- a comprehensive management information system which is used at all levels of the organisation to drive forward key performance indicators identified as a priority for organisational development
- at the last inspection learner support was identified as an area for improvement. Additional learning support is now identified by Inspectors as very good
- Initial assessment is very effective, an issue at the last inspection
- staff use the results of the assessment to promptly plan individual support for learners
- managers use data effectively to identify courses that will need additional learning support
- success rates of learners who receive additional learning support are similar to other learners.