



Learning and Skills Beacons



department for
education and skills



Learning+Skills Council

Learning and Skills Beacon status, announced on 7 March 2002 by Margaret Hodge, the then Lifelong Learning, Further and Higher Education Minister, recognises and celebrates high quality teaching and training and effective and well managed institutions. Recognising and celebrating excellence has now become a key part of the strategy to reform Further Education and Training – *Success for All*.

By April 2003, 13 colleges and 12 work based learning providers had been awarded the status. The standard is deliberately high and Beacons are expected to promote innovation and share their good practice with the sector.

A review of the criteria and arrangements is currently underway and it is intended that Beacon status will be extended across the full range of providers funded by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and inspected by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) and the Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI). (A complete listing of Beacons is supplied in Annex A).

Identification of Learning and Skills Beacons

Initially, the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) identifies colleges and work based learning providers which are eligible for consideration for Beacon status recognition from their inspection report grade profile. Subsequently, the LSC is asked to make an assessment of suitability, taking account of performance review data and the anticipated contribution that the prospective Beacon could make to share its good practice across the sector. Having checked with the prospective Beacon that they are happy to receive the status, a recommendation is made to Ministers, and once approved, arrangements made for the presentation of the award. (The eligibility criteria for award of Beacon status are detailed in Annex B).

Benefits of Beacon status

The benefits of the status are that Beacons are given credit and recognition by Ministers for their achievements. The LSC and the Inspectorates wish to ensure that the principle of intervention in inverse proportion to success applies to the top performers. The possibility of less frequent or less intense inspection, taking account of the Beacon's own quality assurance arrangements, is being developed with the Inspectorates. The LSC is also keen to reflect the relationship of trust with Beacons by minimising routine monitoring.

Sharing Good Practice

The LSC funds Beacons to share their good practice through dissemination activities and collaborative work with other colleges and work based learning providers. The targeted activity of Beacons to share good practice is part of the *Success For All* strategy for recognising and investing in excellence, and promoting innovation and excellence across the learning and skills sector.

Funding

Beacons are funded by the LSC to share good practice in their first year of Beacon status, on the basis of a short proposal of activities and associated outcomes, and the production of an evaluation report on completion. They may wish to continue with some Beacon activities in their second year, but there is no requirement for them to do so, to avoid Beacon status becoming a burden.

Networking

The DfES, LSC and Beacons meet three times a year at the National Beacon Forum. The Beacon network is encouraged and discussions include the development of and input to the further development of policy, and its implementation, in raising standards across the whole sector.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Local LSC staff monitor the progress of Beacons with their activities, and provide assistance to them in identifying and gaining access to local and regional networks and individual providers, where needed.

The LSC will review all individual Beacon evaluation reports to identify the kind of impact that the Beacon programme of activities is having in disseminating good practice, and more importantly, transposing it into other colleges and providers. This will inform the future development of the Beacon programme.

Further Information

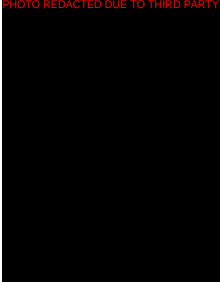
Information on Beacons will be maintained on the 'Quality' area of the LSC website: www.lsc.gov.uk

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The Ministerial announcement of Learning and Skills Beacon status on 7 March 2002 has provided the LSC with an exciting opportunity to further support the raising of standards within the learning and skills sector. The award of DfES Learning and Skills Beacon status gives public recognition of the excellence that exists in general further education colleges, sixth form colleges and work based learning providers that we fund.

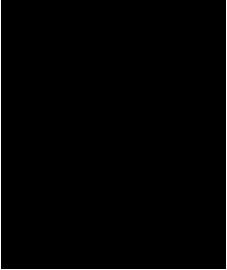
We have sought to support the sharing of practice from the recognised outstanding areas and strengths demonstrated by Beacons in inspection reports, with the needs of fellow colleges and work based learning providers across the sector. This has been done in a spirit of mutual support, where Beacons also learn from those they work with, and from each other. The establishment of a Beacon National Forum, where the Beacons meet with the DfES, LSC, ALI and Ofsted, has aided this partnership approach.

The case studies contained within this booklet provide a description of the work being undertaken and the achievements made by the first two rounds of Learning and Skills Beacons. A third round of Beacons will be commencing their work in summer 2003, and it is anticipated that there will be an evolving network of Beacons that will not only raise awareness of the practices that have made them excellent, but also help others in the sector to understand, adopt and adapt their practices.

Avril Willis
Director, Quality and Standards

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Martyn Sanders
Assistant Principal

General Information

Alton College is a sixth form college. There are 1,420 full-time students, all but approximately 60 of whom are sixth form 16-19 year old students. There are a further 1,700 part-time students, most of whom attend in the evening.

Mission of the College

We are the principal provider of high quality modern sixth form education in east Hampshire and the surrounding areas, and offer a developing range of targeted courses for adults and business. We are committed to providing a working environment which is friendly, supportive and stimulating for all our students, and encouraging and rewarding for all our staff.

Vision statement

We are determined to continue enhancing our reputation as first choice for sixth form students in east Hampshire and beyond and our growing reputation for adult education through a portfolio of carefully chosen, high quality courses.

Areas of Outstanding Practice Identified at Inspection

Key strengths

- outstanding pass rates and many outstanding retention rates on Level 3 courses
- outstanding leadership and management
- good teaching
- college-wide shared priority of 'putting the student first'
- impressive range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities to enhance students' experiences
- good provision for students with learning difficulties and with physical or sensory impairment
- excellent support for students
- specific and effective provision to meet local needs.

Overall judgements about provision

Science: outstanding – teaching is lively and much is very good. Pass rates on General Certificate of Education at Advanced level (GCE A-level) subjects are outstanding. Teachers support students very well

and monitor their progress carefully. Curriculum leadership and management are particularly good. Student attendance rate at lessons is outstanding.

Mathematics: outstanding – teaching is purposeful, and students concentrate and work well in lessons. Some retention and pass rates are outstanding. Students receive particularly good support from teachers. The provision is managed very well.

Information and communications technology (ICT): outstanding – lessons are very well planned and teaching is highly effective. Pass rates are outstanding and students produce work of high quality. There are some excellent teaching materials. Leadership and management of the provision are outstanding. Teachers support students very well. English and modern foreign languages: outstanding – teaching is at least very good; some lessons are outstanding. Many pass rates at GCE Advanced Subsidiary (GCE AS) level and GCE A-level subjects are outstanding. The provision is managed very well, and there is a wide range of activities to complement students' studies.

Leadership and management of the college are outstanding. Since the last inspection in 1998, the college has widened its range of courses, managed a substantial building programme, further improved its quality assurance arrangements, maintained its high pass rates in many areas and improved others. Many retention and pass rates are outstanding. Governors demonstrate outstanding commitment to the college and oversee its performance very well. Governors and college staff have a common sense of purpose and share a clear vision of the college's future. Communication throughout the college is very good and staff morale is high. Financial management is good.

Extensive and thorough arrangements for providing support and guidance for students of all ages are very effective. The college goes to great lengths to ensure that students enrol on appropriate courses and the proportion of students who change their courses after enrolling is small. There is a well-managed tutorial system through which tutors monitor students' progress with care. Teachers also give very good support to students. Teachers and tutors monitor attendance and punctuality at lessons; the attendance rate is excellent and students are punctual. Students receive very good careers

education and guidance to help them progress to higher education (HE) or employment. Those with learning difficulties, and also those with mobility or sensory impairment, are supported particularly well.

Summary of Dissemination Project

Alton College will be promoting and running two one-day workshops relating to quality assurance and target setting, including development and use of service standards, user opinion surveys and action planning. These will be available to colleges and workplace providers. The aim will be to share good practice in quality assurance and to enable providers to revise their own arrangements in light of good practice.

The college believes that the best way to share good practice is to meet the specific needs of providers. Hence we are happy to hear from colleges and workplace providers with which we can work on a one-to-one consultancy basis. We are able to offer this facility both in leadership and management and in the curriculum areas in which we were graded as having outstanding provision (mathematics, ICT, science, English and modern foreign languages). Recently we have been working with two colleges in relation to the science curriculum and leadership and management. Indeed, one found the experience so helpful that we are now working together in other subject areas.

Further development is being undertaken to the college learning site in order to

ensure widespread sharing of effective learning resources used at the college. All curriculum areas were graded 1 by inspectors. These will become accessible via the college's intranet and website. Using the website will enable colleges and other providers to access good practice materials, as and when they need them.

We understand that many new teachers are reluctant to work in the post-16 sector. Therefore we wish to work with local teacher training providers in order to raise awareness and understanding of the role of post-16 colleges among those undertaking teacher training. This will include opportunities for classroom observation as well as opportunities to talk to staff and students about working in the post-compulsory sector.

A training day for further education (FE) teachers of mathematics will be provided in order to explore teaching and learning methods in A-level and Advanced Subsidiary level (AS-level) mathematics, and in which differing approaches will be examined. Delegates will be provided with a number of tools and techniques for improving their teaching, making maths more accessible to students.

The college will be providing a training day for FE teachers of A-level and AS-level English, focusing upon differing approaches to teaching English texts. The day will include a visiting notable speaker, for example, from the Royal Shakespeare Company. Delegates will be provided with a number of tools and techniques for improving the teaching of

English texts and making them more accessible to students. Teaching and learning materials used within the English department will be made available as a resource pack for delegates.

We are also working with a neighbouring Beacon college to identify common elements of good practice. We intend to produce a publication to disseminate our findings.

In addition, we are providing mentoring support and guidance to the leaders and managers within the one department at the college graded 3.

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Godfrey Glyn
Principal

General Information

Barton Peveril is a large sixth form college, situated in the borough of Eastleigh. We are proud of our high and improving levels of achievement and student retention. We have a strong commitment to improvement, with a well-developed system of internal review that not only regularly examines the teaching and learning in the classroom, but also support functions.

This year we have 1,890 full-time 16-19 year old students who are drawn from a catchment area that includes Eastleigh, Southampton, Winchester and a wide band of south-central Hampshire. We have excellent relationships with our partner schools and neighbouring general FE college, working closely with them in a consortium.

The majority of our full-time 16-19 year old students study at GCE A-level. We offer over 50 subjects at GCE Advanced Subsidiary (AS) level and A2, together with a wide range of Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education (AVCE) courses. A significant minority of our full-time students study at Level 2, following General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) courses together with the essential General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) courses of mathematics and English if appropriate.

There is a wide range of enrichment activities. We have a strong tradition in sport, with some of the most successful teams in the county. We also have lively drama and music departments and many departments organise trips both abroad and within the UK. Over 580 students progress to HE courses each year, and we have negotiated compacts with all the Hampshire HE establishments.

We offer a range of courses to over 1,300 part-time adult students. In addition to GCE A-level examination courses, there is an increasing provision in the area of basic skills. We work closely with our neighbour, Eastleigh College, to meet the needs of the community.

Mission of the College

Barton Peveril College aims to be a centre of excellence in post-16 education, adding value to our students' experience and levels of achievement.

Areas of Outstanding Practice Identified at Inspection

Key strengths

- high pass rates by students
- much good or very good teaching
- effective guidance and support for students
- thorough assessment and rigorous monitoring of students' progress
- an extensive enrichment programme
- stimulating environment
- good leadership, with an open and consultative management style.

All areas of the curriculum were graded as either outstanding or good.

Summary of Dissemination Project

Barton Peveril College has a range of activities on offer including conferences, one-day workshops and individual consultancy. We are also happy to arrange for colleagues to visit Barton Peveril in order to talk to staff.

The college is a member of the Hampshire Sixth Form Colleges' Partnership and, in conjunction with the Sixth Form College, Farnborough, it will be making a major contribution to two partnership conferences. The first conference will concentrate on 'Supporting the Student', while the second is curriculum-focused.

The areas of activity that Barton Peveril have chosen for dissemination are as given below. Working on an individual basis with other colleges, we are able to offer workshops on topics b-g.

- a use of an internal quality review process to improve the quality of teaching and learning;
- b use of information technology (IT) and the intranet to support learning in geography;
- c use of the Apple Mac in teaching media studies;
- d improving retention on GNVQ and AVCE courses;
- e developing an management information system user interface for use by teaching and student support staff;
- f effective learning support for students; and
- g the work of the governors' standards committee.

The report identified that we have a well-established internal quality review programme for the internal observation and grading of lessons, complemented by our membership of the External Quality Review System. Therefore we are able to offer a team to work with colleges in order to set up, or develop their own internal quality review processes.

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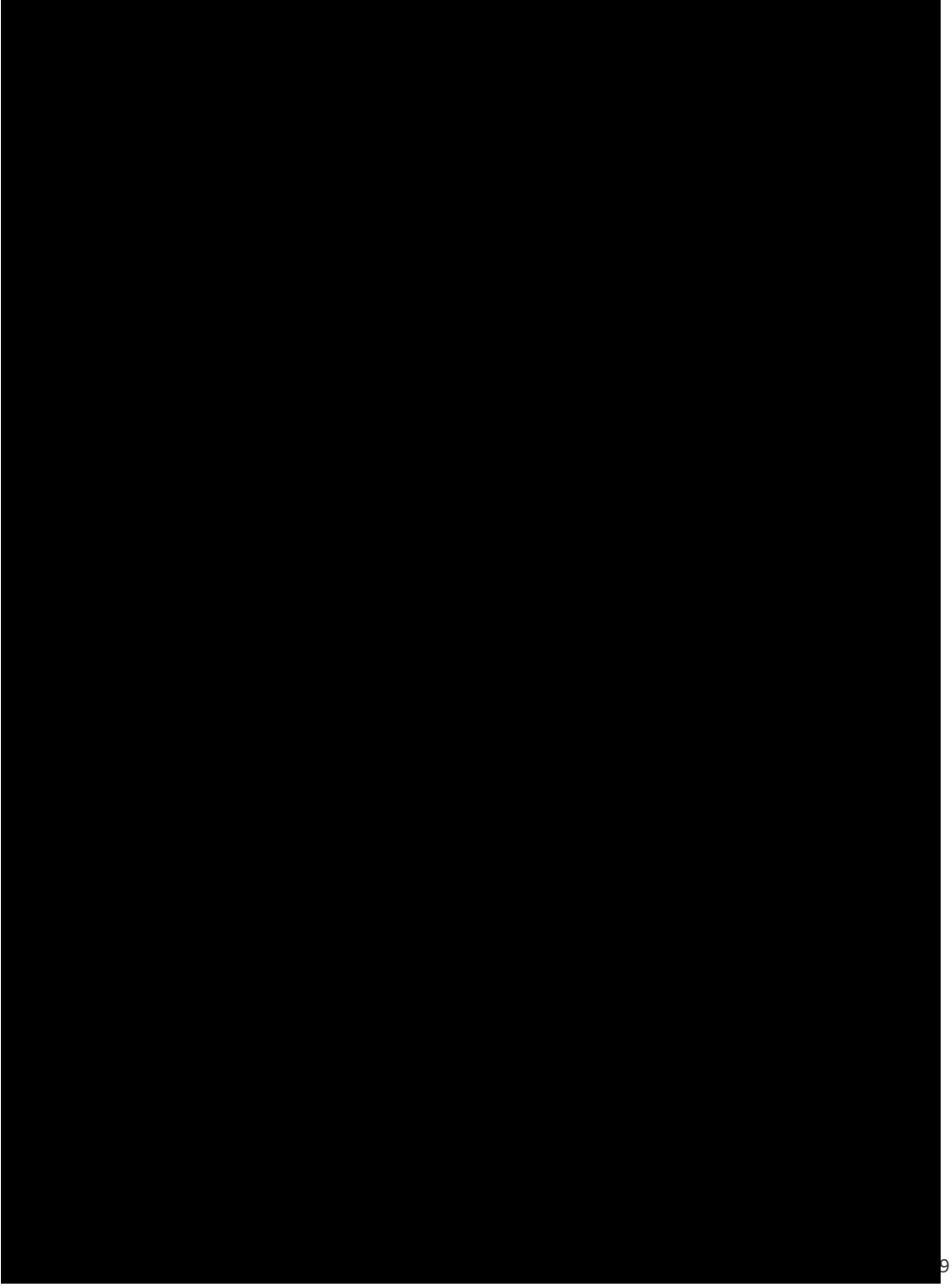
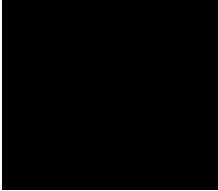


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Left to right: Kelly Tattar
FMA Co-ordinator,
Jo Perrins Group Trainer,
Neil Moss Group
Controller training and
Development, Rosalind
Wood Personell manager
Wolverhampton Store

General Information

James Beattie PLC (Beatties) is engaged in department store retailing. The company currently operates 11 stores employing over 3,500 people. The company was established in 1877 by James Beattie, who opened a small drapery store on part of the site currently occupied by the Wolverhampton store.

Beatties currently operates in-house training, Foundation Modern Apprenticeship (FMA) and Retail FMA programmes at four stores: Birkenhead, Dudley, Solihull and Wolverhampton. These stores provide training for over 60 learners. The learners are guided and supported by 80 retail managers who are trained assessors, illustrating our commitment to providing high quality training and development to young people. Beatties has recently entered into a contract with the Black Country LSC for the operation of these FMA programmes. Wolverhampton also offers an FMA programme in administration.

Beatties has a well-established reputation for high quality training, having run post-16 training programmes for some time and its retail management training scheme for many years. Beatties also takes an active part in working with young people through other initiatives, including:

- Company Work Experience Programme;
- Young Enterprise Schemes; and
- membership of Wolverhampton Education Action Zone.

Our longstanding commitment to government-funded training for 16-19 year olds has, and continues to be, a key element of our training policy. Recruitment, training and development and provision of good conditions of service are critical elements of Beatties' philosophy. The 'people' aspect of the business is a top priority at both strategic and operational levels.

Each store has a full-time personnel manager with responsibility for training. The four stores operating FMA programmes have an FMA co-ordinator, who also performs the internal verifier role. In addition, there is a dedicated part-time assessor, as well as retail department managers who are trained assessors. Quality assurance of learning and assessment are rigorously monitored by the FMA co-ordinators and internal verifiers. The group trainer works closely with the internal

verifiers to maintain and improve both the infrastructure for, and the development of learning and assessment.

Our FMA programmes offer well-structured training provision, geared towards developing learners' retail and key skills in a busy trading environment. Learners are offered a wide range of training activities, including a residential outdoor personal development course.

Areas of Outstanding Practice Identified at Inspection

Key strengths

- effectiveness of training in furthering learners' personal development
- well-structured training programme
- wide range of learning activities
- excellent practical support for learners
- effective assessment of key skills
- careful management of learning
- effective policies and procedures
- good communications
- highly effective action-planning to improve training
- excellent understanding of equal opportunities among learners
- thorough evaluation of learning
- thorough internal verification
- success of many learners in obtaining relevant employment.

Summary of Dissemination Project

Beatties' delivery of dissemination activity is focused upon the good practice area of leadership and management, as recognised through the recent inspection report. Key activities to be delivered include the following.

Consultancy support

Beatties will make directors and senior managers available to deliver support to employers who have been identified by the local LSC as considering the introduction of an apprenticeship scheme. The activity will vary depending on the needs and requirements of the LSC, providers, employers and Beatties' strengths as a work based learning provider. It is expected that some of the consultancy will be on a one-to-one basis.

Leadership training

Beatties will deliver a three-month leadership training course in order to support and facilitate the development of a local collaborative improvement programme for managers to achieve and maintain recognition as an excellent provider. The course is to be delivered through use of external facilitators and will consist of an initial two-day programme which is open to managers from both Beatties and fellow providers, as identified

by the local LSC. Four half-day follow-up consultancy sessions will be available for all attendees to support the embedding of all activities. The purpose is to create an orientation toward excellence by developing leadership and coaching individuals and teams in best practice.

Within 12 months of completing the programme, it is expected that attendees will be able to demonstrate the following:

- maintaining and improving LSC performance review classification;
- successful adoption of techniques for effective leadership and performance management;
- evaluating and improving staff performance using defined techniques; and
- production of case-study material to support sharing of good practice to a wider audience.

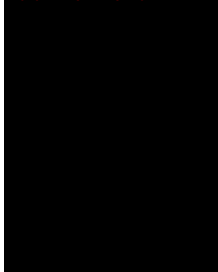
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Fiona McMillan
Principal

General Information

Bridgwater College is based on a modern, purpose-built campus and is responsible for all the post-16 education and training in Bridgwater and its surrounding area.

It provides a comprehensive range of academic and vocational programmes for full-time and part-time students in 13 out of the 14 areas of learning defined by the LSC. As a tertiary college it provides the main progression route for young people leaving local secondary schools at the age of 16, and now has more than 2,400 full-time 16-18 year old students. It provides education and training to a total of more than 10,000 adults, HE students and employees of local companies each year. Recently it has also developed a significant vocational curriculum for 14-16 year olds from local schools on link programmes.

The college has won a number of prestigious national awards in recent years, including a Queen's Anniversary Prize for Higher and Further Education in 2000 and AoC Beacon Awards in four out of the past five years.

Mission of the College

To inspire the people of our community to achieve success by providing the best possible opportunities for learning, a creative and exciting partnership with our staff and a welcoming and supportive environment.

Areas of Outstanding Practice Identified at Inspection

Key strengths

- commitment of staff to excellence
- outstanding pass and retention rates on many courses
- very good teaching and learning in all curriculum areas
- highly effective governance, leadership and management
- outstanding accommodation and equipment
- regular, thorough and fair assessment of students' work
- outstanding guidance and support for students
- wide range of courses and enrichment opportunities.

Managers and teachers work closely together to ensure high quality teaching and learning. Teachers are well qualified: almost all possess degrees or higher technical qualifications; most possess teaching qualifications. There are good opportunities for staff development; teachers are selected rigorously and advanced teaching practitioners are used effectively to disseminate good practice.

Both achievement and retention rates are in the top quartile of performance at Levels 1, 2 and 3 for both 16-18 year olds and adults. Overall pass rates for GCE A-levels are excellent, with most students achieving better results than those predicted on the basis of GCSE results. Good results are also achieved on vocational programmes at all levels and adult students' achievements are outstanding. Most students with learning difficulties or disabilities learn sufficiently well to be able to get a job or become more independent.

Teaching was outstanding or good in 87% of lessons (the fourth highest score in the history of college inspections since 1993). Teachers are enthusiastic and good working relationships exist with students, who are highly motivated and enjoy their

studies. The standard of students' work observed in lessons during inspection was generally good or better.

Leadership and management are outstanding. Managers in curriculum areas provide effective, enthusiastic and often inspiring leadership. Senior managers are dynamic. Monitoring performance is comprehensive and thorough across all programmes and services. Staff and governors work together closely and have been successful in expanding the range of provision, raising academic standards and developing the college site. Quality assurance systems are excellent.

Accommodation and resources are outstanding. Specialist facilities in many areas are outstanding, for example in motor vehicle engineering, early years education, photography, performing arts, business studies and computing. Managers are particularly effective in securing external funding to improve quality of provision.

Assessment is well managed: students value the quality and regularity of feedback on their strengths and weaknesses and advice on how to improve.

Tutorial support is outstanding. Induction procedures are comprehensive and personal tutors know their tutees very well; effective systems ensure that they are well informed about their tutee's progress. In most curriculum areas the target setting and review process is effective. Communication with parents of 16-18 year olds is very good and good support is provided for students applying to university or seeking employment.

The college has excellent external links, with students, employers and other external partners' views sought and used to improve both the quality and range of courses offered. Local community groups, employers, public services and schools regard the college as highly responsive. Comprehensive enrichment programmes are organised, both within course programmes, and as optional activities available to all students.

Summary of Dissemination Project

The college is currently working with 30 colleges and organisations on various issues related to teaching and learning strategies, tutorial practice and additional support.

Six colleges have received support in preparing for inspection. Support included advice on teaching and learning observations, writing self-assessment reports and validating reports.

Practitioners from other colleges have visited (and are in the process of visiting) the college in relation to specific subject areas. Some have met with senior tutors to consider tutorial practices and with other staff to consider the ICT, sports and mathematics Level 3 curricula. Another college has met with the head of learner services and teaching staff to share good practice on supporting students with additional learning needs.

Work with schools and Somerset Connexions staff has included seminars and meetings to promote and share good practice relating to guidance, teaching and learning.

Colleges have been keen to share Bridgwater College's practice relating to the use of advanced practitioners.

The college is further developing the use of the college learning site for dissemination purposes and for use by its own staff and students through the introduction of a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). The college has appointed a learning site manager and is in the process of purchasing VLE software. Ten programmes have been identified to pilot the use of VLE in order to enhance learning.

The August/September 2003 staff conference will launch the use of VLE at Bridgwater College and provide an opportunity for the pilot programmes to share their experiences. Initially, good practice will be shared across the college. Following the launch, good practice will be shared with other colleges, schools

and universities. It is envisaged that other colleges and workplace providers will be able to access the college's learning resources in order to enhance teaching and learning.

Part-time HE provision will be delivered within a more flexible curriculum structure to widen participation and enhance learning. VLE will support and enhance developments.

The Automotive Engineering Section has developed a student tracking site to improve student assessment tracking. Managing agents are now able to access student information relating to their progress. The tracking systems will be transferred to other workplace provider programmes including engineering, electrical installation and construction for Advanced Modern Apprenticeship and Foundation Modern Apprenticeship provision.

Other institutions that the college has worked in partnership with since the award of Beacon Status have included: Bournemouth and Poole College, Brooklands College, Greenwich College, Halesowen College, Henley College Merton College, Oxford College, Richmond upon Thames College, Rugby College, South Cheshire College, South Devon College, Tower Hamlets College, Tresham Institute, Waltham Forest College, West London and Acton College, Weymouth College; and Yeovil College.

Other external agencies who have made contact with the college include the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority and the National Association for Managers of Student Services (NAMSS).

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Ian MacNaughton
Principal

General Information

The Sixth Form College, Colchester was established in 1987 and occupies a town centre site which was mainly purpose built. The college was originally intended to provide for around 850 students but now has around 2,200 students, with a significant minority drawn from outside the Colchester area. The curriculum reflects the strong, level demand for a sixth form college education with emphasis on GCE A-level and at AS-level courses, with some GCSE, AVCE and National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) provision. Alongside these programmes a wide range of additional studies and extra-curricular activities provides enrichment. The college will also be offering the International Baccalaureate Diploma programme from September 2003, which will provide a wider and international programme of education for appropriate students.

Mission of the College

The college's prime aim is the provision of high quality, full-time academic and general education courses to meet the needs of young people between the ages of 16 and 19 who live in the Colchester area; and at the same time to equip them with the qualifications, skills and personal attributes required to move successfully and happily into higher or further education, employment and future life.

Areas of Outstanding Practice Identified at Inspection

Key strengths

- good student achievements
- good learning
- good teaching
- high levels of student retention
- good progression to HE
- excellent support and guidance
- well-managed introduction of Curriculum 2000
- good range of courses
- well-qualified, committed and experienced staff
- good communications across the college.

The Ofsted inspection report was published in 2002, following the inspection of the college from 10-14 December 2001.

The dissemination activities aim to provide opportunities to identify examples of good practice that improve retention and achievement; to participate actively in the review of Curriculum 2000 and consider ways in which it can be employed to improve retention and achievement; to develop the use of Information and Learning Technology (ILT) within teaching and learning; and to participate with other schools in the operation of a local School-Centred Initial Teacher Training (SCITT) in which new teachers can learn from examples of good practice.

Summary of Dissemination Project

The dissemination project consists of five strands, each with a different focus.

Opportunities are being provided for colleagues both within the college and at a regional level to consider examples of departmental self-assessment reports (SARs), which highlight significant strengths and areas for improvement. The report format provides quantitative data in respect of key performance indicators, and allows academic departments to monitor their performance with colleagues and also in relation to national benchmarks. The departmental

SAR format and processes will be shared with local and regional colleges, both individually and through organisations such as the Association of Colleges in the Eastern Region (ACER), encouraging an open, reflective climate of critical evaluation which leads to improvements in retention and achievement.

The college is working with a number of organisations including the DfES, the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) and the LSC in the review of Curriculum 2000, in order to ensure that appropriate strategies are implemented to improve retention and achievement in individual subjects and at programme level. Outcomes will include the development of cross-college strategies such as timetable arrangements, and support and monitoring systems and procedures. Data and case studies will be used to assess and make recommendations in respect of practical considerations which have an impact on student achievements, such as the taking of examinations in the January series.

The college is reviewing its existing Development and Self-assessment (DASA) system in order to further encourage staff to reflect on teaching and learning styles while developing opportunities for sharing good practice. The outcomes will include a review of the current lesson observation proforma, and a system which will fully integrate performance management processes. In addition, the college will provide a clear model for the integration of development planning and quality assurance processes at college, departmental and individual staff level. When the process has been developed, it will be shared with local colleges.

The college is actively pursuing the integration of new technology into teaching and learning where appropriate. This includes the purchase and staff training in the use of technologies such as interactive whiteboards, PowerPoint and portable 'laptop trolley' facilities.

Departments will nominate representatives to develop the initiative and cascade developments. Various opportunities will be made available to ensure that local schools and colleges can be informed of developments. (In this respect, the SCITT development mentioned below will play a part.) We also intend to work with Postgraduate Certificate of Education (PGCE) students from the London Institute of Education during the summer term.

The college is working with 11 schools in Colchester to implement a local SCITT providing a teacher-training experience (supported by a PGCE qualification) for 40

trainees a year in English (with drama), mathematics, science, information and communications technology (ICT), modern foreign languages and physical education. Commencing in September 2003, the college will be offering trainees sixth form placements and opportunities to learn from examples of best practice.

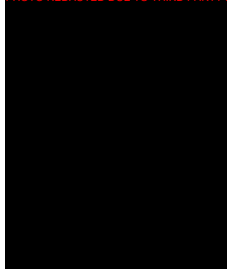
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Dr John Guy
Principal

General Information

The Sixth Form College, Farnborough has in excess of 2,000 16-19 year old full-time students and offers provision at Levels 1, 2 and 3: Level 1: Foundation Course; Level 2: principally Intermediate GNVQ; Level 3: GCE A-level and AVCE programmes (55 subject titles).

Mission of the College

To develop as a distinguished major provider of the highest quality academic and vocational education, leading to higher education and employment; to contribute to national targets for education and training

and

to develop the lively and caring atmosphere of the college, enriching the lives of all students and equipping them with the qualifications and skills to meet the demands of a changing world with confidence and assurance.

Areas of Outstanding Practice Identified at Inspection.

Key strengths

- high retention and pass rates
- outstanding teaching and learning
- high standards of students' work
- excellent support for students
- outstanding leadership and management
- rigorous monitoring of students' progress
- excellent attendance and punctuality
- effective implementation of the new GCE AS-level qualifications
- very good accommodation and teaching resources
- comprehensive enrichment activities
- good use of IT within the curriculum
- effective financial management.

The quality of teaching and the standards of students' achievement are outstanding in six out of the nine curriculum areas which were inspected. They are good in the remaining three areas. Leadership and management of the college are outstanding.

The inspectors found excellence at all levels of the college's provision, but it was the quality of teaching and learning that particularly distinguished the college. Of all lessons observed, 91% were found to be good, very good or excellent.

Inspection judgements

- science and mathematics: outstanding (grade 1)
- business studies: outstanding (grade 1)
- leisure, recreation and physical education: outstanding (grade 1)
- art and design and media: outstanding (grade 1)
- performing arts: outstanding (grade 1)
- social sciences: outstanding (grade 1)
- leadership and management: outstanding (grade 1).

Extracts from the report

The levels of attainment in lessons were consistently higher than expected.

Teaching is challenging and inspires students to develop high-level skills.

Students learn how to be critical and analytical as well as gaining good subject knowledge.

Teachers are enthusiastic, well informed and up to date in the knowledge of their subjects. Many have a wide range of teaching experience and bring a strong sense of commitment and enthusiasm to their job.

Students are involved in the selection of teachers. Each prospective teacher gives a short lesson to a group of students. The students evaluate the teachers' performance and this evaluation contributes to the judgements about appointment.
Ofsted, March 2002

The report recommended that the following should be improved: pass rates on some GCSE programmes; retention rates on adult programmes and pass and retention rates on a small number of courses.

Further aspects of provision requiring improvement are identified in the sections on individual subjects and courses in the full report.

Summary of Dissemination Project

The dissemination project aims to develop the sharing of good practice which was established in summer 2002, and to respond positively to further requests.

Sharing and development of good practice within the college will be further improved, especially the developments in teaching to match learning styles.

Good practice in teaching and learning, through extension of interactive whiteboard technology, will enable departments to build upon and share the success of others; for example in physics where 46% of students achieved grade A in AS level in 2002.

Specialist tutorial provision using teachers as pastoral specialists: support for students in this college is described as outstanding, contributing to the high levels of retention and achievement. It is achieved through specialist provision using 'super-tutors'. This 'super-tutor' model is being further developed and the experiences are being shared with other colleges, with particular interest expressed by some general further education colleges.

As a consequence of the dissemination project, the college has advised a college of general further education on the implementation of a similar model focussing on the support of learners in a more vocationally – orientated environment. The college has hosted visits from other colleges within the sector, advising on the benefits of the super tutor

model in terms both of consistency in quality and financial efficiency.

CRISTAL – This management information system was described by Ofsted as exemplary. The system has been installed successfully in Reigate college. The system is under constant development; the college acts as a consultant in the development of in-house systems and has made the source code available to other colleges for installation as a working system.

The college provides external speakers for staff development events and has been consulted widely on the development of leadership and timetabling strategies.

Regarding leadership, the college is participating in national developments to promote good practice. It aims to respond positively to all invitations that are received since Beacon Status was announced.

Curriculum 2000 demands a suitable timetabling structure, and an innovative scheme introduced in this college is now being established in other colleges following dissemination activities. Further advice will be offered as the system improves at Farnborough.

The college is working with a number of colleges to develop teaching and learning techniques in a variety of curriculum areas, notably: chemistry and the sciences, mathematics, business studies, performing arts and media and film studies.

Currently, it is developing exemplar material to assist assessment in Level 3 courses in conjunction with partner colleges and exam boards.

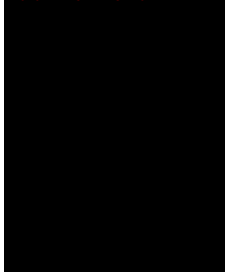
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Simon Bygrave
Senior Training Officer

General Information

'Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service has been identified as a world class training provider.' Ivan Lewis MP Minister for Young People and Adult Skills, 8 October Beacon Award.

The service has a centralised training and development centre geared towards management, technical and specialist training needs for personnel operating at all levels of the organisation, from newly recruited fire-fighters to executive management level. The service has a centralised training and development centre geared towards management, technical and specialist training needs for personnel operating at all levels of the organisation, from recruited fire-fighters to executive management level.

New entrants to the service who fit the age criteria are afforded the benefits that go with the Modern Apprenticeship Scheme, such as enhanced levels of Key Skills training.

Modern apprentices are subject to a 14-week intensive basic training course aligned to Fire Service National Occupational Standards. During this training period they undergo continuous practical assessments, written technical assessments and are required to pass nationally accredited examinations in First Aid.

The following learning and development opportunities are available to all personnel involved in the Modern Apprenticeship Scheme:

- NVQ Level 3 – 'Operations in the Community';
- NVQ Level 3 – 'Control Operations';
- basic fire craft;
- breathing apparatus;
- specialist rescue;
- First Aid and trauma care;
- Key Skills; and
- assessor and internal verifier.

To date, 40 trainees have been through the Modern Apprenticeship Scheme in Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service.

Areas of Outstanding Practice Identified at Inspection

Key strengths

- excellent training resources
- very well-delivered training
- good support throughout training
- excellent retention rates
- thoroughly planned training
- highly effective leadership
- comprehensive equal opportunities strategy.

Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service has been identified as 'a world class training provider'.

Summary of Dissemination Project

The focus of the project is to disseminate good practice in the development, design and delivery of training for new trainees. The training of fire service personnel is very specialised; therefore the primary anticipated target audience is other local authority fire services. However, due to the nature of the training undertaken there may be some benefits to be gained by other work based learning providers, particularly those that have fire or safety teams.

With regard to the main target audience, it is hoped that the dissemination of best practice will enable other brigades to introduce swiftly courses aligned to National Occupational Standards without the need for expensive and time consuming development processes. This dissemination will be undertaken in a variety of ways.

Seminars will disseminate what we do to local employers, training organisations and other fire services. Through workshops we will be able to bring together like-minded organisations to share in the development of procedures, practices and training activities. Newsletters will inform and promote best practice to a wider audience, and individual consultation will take place with external providers. We will design web pages in order to promote the activities of Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service, including our NVQ processes, video footage of training, case studies and electronic links to our teaching and learning materials. For organisations that do not have the facility to download information electronically, we will be producing copies of our material on CD-ROMs and in hardcopy form.

By sharing our experiences of introducing and developing NVQs and Key Skills and promoting best practice, we hope to assist other organisations in the effective, efficient and economic implementation of competence based training.

This contact with other providers will expose us to a wide range of alternative procedures and practices from which we may derive some added value.

The following are our achievements to date: we have developed a partnership with Lincolnshire Fire Service to train their recruit fire fighters. We have held consultations with Norfolk and Bedfordshire Fire Services to share our experiences, as well as our teaching and learning materials. Bedfordshire Fire Service has a training collaboration with Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Fire Service, which will lead to a further dissemination of best practice. We have employed a graphic designer who has started work on developing our website. Through our contact with Humberside Fire Service we have taken on board the concept of a service-wide newsletter.

Contact

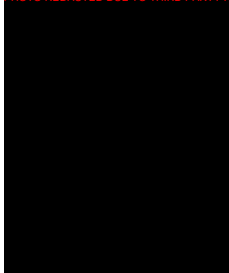
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Mrs Linda Sinclair
Deputy Principal

General Information

Hills Road Sixth Form College is one of two sixth form colleges in Cambridge serving the needs of students in the city and the surrounding area. There are 1,600 full-time students, all of whom follow GCE A-level or AVCE level courses. The college has an extensive evening adult education programme: approximately 3,000 adults enrol on courses ranging from A-level psychology to landscape gardening. Full-time students enrol at the college from 18 partner schools through the collegiate board, which comprises the heads of the six post-16 centres in Cambridge and of the partner schools. The collegiate board provides a common application procedure, and co-ordinates the information and guidance services for 16+ transfer.

Mission of the College

The college is committed to offering an education of the highest quality by promoting academic achievement, vocational skills and personal and social development. Emphasis is placed upon students taking responsibility for their own learning.

Areas of Outstanding Practice Identified at Inspection

Key strengths

- outstanding examination results
- excellent standards of coursework
- high standards of teaching and learning
- strong capacity of students to work independently
- wide choice of GCE A and AS-level courses
- very good progression to higher education and employment
- clear direction from governors and senior management
- systematic approach to measuring and improving achievement
- excellent support and guidance by tutors
- extensive opportunities for sporting, cultural and other activities
- promotion of excellence through the initiative and enthusiasm of staff and students.

Following an Ofsted inspection in autumn 2001, the college was awarded grade 1 for all 10 curriculum areas inspected and grade 1 for leadership and management. In 2002 the college was awarded the Queen's Anniversary Prize in recognition of the work undertaken by its art and design department in partnership with the local community. The college has Investor in People status.

The college has a high reputation for achieving outstanding results at GCSE, A-level and AS-level. In 2002 the college's A-level pass rate was 99%, with 85% of entries resulting in grades A, B or C. Approximately 90% of students progress to higher education, including approximately 60 each year to Oxford and Cambridge.

Inspectors said of the college that 'strong leadership is provided by the Principal, the College Strategy Team and the Corporation', and one in which 'there is a firm focus on the students and the standards they achieve' (inspection report, 2001/02). Inspectors also identified that the 'Heads of subject departments are highly effective leaders', and that 'there is a strong tradition of self-critical examination'.

Summary of Dissemination Project

Our dissemination of good practice is based on the following principles: leadership and management at all levels; raising students' achievements and creation of a stimulating learning environment.

Four departments – history, economics and business studies, art and design and mathematics – have each formed a partnership with a counterpart in one of the following three colleges: Aylesbury College, College of North-East London and Hertford Regional College.

Each head of department has agreed areas of focus with her/his partner which will be helpful to the partner college, to include:

- leadership and teamwork;
- planning of resources;
- raising examination performance;
- extending gifted and talented students;
- independent learning;
- work in the community (art and design); and
- the role of continuing professional development in improving teaching and learning.

The use of ICT in teaching and learning will be explored through continuing development of the college's website. This will include:

- sharing of teaching and learning resources currently being produced at Hills Road;
- hosting a national IT history conference to be run jointly with JISC and/or FERL, to which Beacon partners will be invited; and
- development of an Internet chat room to support discussion groups.

The website will contain teaching and learning materials and other information about the college's practice which will be of use to Beacon partners and to all colleges in the sector.

Staff in the partner colleges visit Hills Road and have the opportunity to meet staff and students and talk to senior managers. Hills Road staff from the four departments visit the partner college (by mutual agreement) for an exchange of ideas and expertise.

Using a case study approach, a report will be produced showing how the partnerships developed. Outcomes in terms of improving the quality of teaching and learning will be explored in the report.

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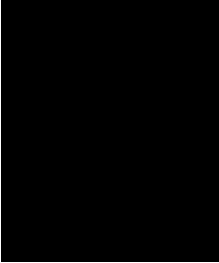
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Alison Ashworth-Brown
Head of Craft and
Vocational Training

General Information

NG Bailey & Co (NG Bailey) is a third generation, family owned mechanical and electrical contractors established in 1921, with a turnover of over £350 million and a staff over 3,000. The craft-training department provides training only for employees of the company. The apprenticeship programme is partly funded by the LSC.

NG Bailey is the largest independent mechanical and electrical contracting company in the UK, with a network of 20 branches nationwide. The main craft-training centre is in Leeds, with a second for electrical training only in Birmingham. The Company employs all apprentices, and currently has a total of 420 Modern Apprentices, of which around 100 fall under a local enterprise company. NG Bailey deliver apprenticeships in electrotechnical, heating and ventilating, service and maintenance, building services engineering and plumbing.

The training is partly funded for the English apprentices by a single contract though the West Yorkshire LSC. The Company provides the funding for additional training, personal protective equipment, tools and travel and lodgings.

The apprentices work for local branches from Aberdeen to Southampton and receive on-the-job training on-site at these locations; off-the-job training is provided at Leeds and Birmingham craft training centres, and some FE provision is contracted out to colleges. The Company is a member of the Joint Industry Board, Scottish Joint Industry Board, the Heating and Ventilating Contractors Association and the Electrical Contractors Association. All training meets the requirements of these industry boards as well as the national training organisations National Electrotechnical Training and the Engineering Services Training Trust Limited and awarding bodies. NG Bailey is also a CoVE Extension Pathfinder.

Areas of Outstanding Practice Identified at Inspection

Regarding subcontracting arrangements, communications with subcontracted colleges are frequent, well managed and effective. Formal meetings take place between NG Bailey and subcontracting colleges every three months. These meetings are used to discuss

contract compliance and levels of service being provided. Weekly visits to the subcontractor are carried out, including checks on learner attendance, performance and progression. When additional concerns are raised, meetings are arranged at short notice to discuss the issues. Formal minutes are taken at each meeting and responsibilities are clearly defined.

For initial assessment, all learners undergo NG Bailey's strict company assessment procedure. Parents/guardians are invited to potential learners' final selection interviews. This enables NG Bailey to inform the parent/guardian about the learners' programme and how they can assist in learner progression.

Retention and achievement rates are high. Apprentices are encouraged to take higher-level qualification after the completion of their apprenticeship. Apprentices are well supported throughout their training. Other reasons for high retention and achievement rates are: well-planned training, good on-site training opportunities and well-equipped training centres.

Summary of Dissemination Project

The company will look at the ALI/self-assessment report for information on providers' subcontracting arrangements, also examining written procedures, if in place. There will be assessment visits to assess current status and analysis, checking for any movement forward or backwards, and a report will be made of these visits.

Feedback meetings will be organised in order to go through the report. Priorities will be set for development work, for example, what can be actioned quickly and what is the most important.

The company will draw up a plan of the way forward for the coming months, with development sessions for learning/practice-sharing and consultation. Follow-up visits to check whether changes are working will be made, including the availability of telephone support for any problems. To conclude, a final assessment visit and report will be made.

NG Bailey has established partnerships with FE colleges and dissemination with three West Yorkshire providers is being undertaken.

In terms of disseminating good practice, the company is working closely with National Contracting Service, The Learning and Skills Development Agency (LSDA) and other local LSCs, and has hosted 'learning Raids' for one local LSC. Talks and Dissemination have also taken place at several national conferences including, College Construction Heads Conference, Association of Learning Providers Conference and the NATHFE Conference

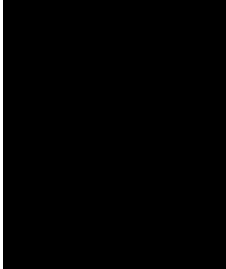
The company anticipates assessment of past-state analysis and starting point for non-inspected provision. In addition, we hope to see an improvement in initial assessment practices, which should in turn show improvements in early leaver rates. There will also be revised subcontracting arrangements to improve performance management of contracts and learning of trainees. NG Bailey is an employer organisation. Direct links with other employers will be made through LSDA and the National Contracting Service.

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Dawn Ainsworth
Cadet Programme Manager

General Information

We deliver the Advanced Modern Apprenticeship in care, taking 10 learners a year. We offer training opportunities in adult mental health and learning disability nursing. The programme leads to guaranteed places at Keele University for learners who successfully complete the programme. Following nurse training, learners return to work for the Trust. It was our intention to look at recruiting and retaining nurses within the organisation, offering an alternative route into nursing.

Areas of Outstanding Practice Identified at Inspection

Key strengths

- high profile of programme within the Trust
- well-structured and managed programme
- good training
- effective procedures to monitor the quality of training
- independent, self-motivated apprentices
- good retention rates.

Summary of Dissemination Project

The main aims of sharing good practice will be to offer a number of alternative ways of working together, including work-shadowing and mentorship or in a consultancy role. It is intended that we will work with a number of local training providers in order to address a variety of areas: quality assurance, internal verification practices, key skills, planning and delivery of training, provision of effective support for learners, general help and advice.

Monitoring of effectiveness will be agreed with individual providers, dependent upon their needs.

Partnerships will also include working with other NHS trusts relating to cadet schemes and funding, colleges and other training providers outside the local LSC. North Staffs Combined Healthcare NHS Trust has provided a range of dissemination activities since receiving the award of Learning and Skills Beacon. The dissemination activity can be grouped into four areas, as described below.

Combined Healthcare has assessed the sharing of documentation and paperwork and has established a partnership arrangement with Newcastle College, involving discussions around procedures in relation to the assessment process, initial visits and reviews. Information has also been exchanged regarding NVQ assessment records, plans and internal verification checklists. Initial discussions have also been held with training providers from 'In 2 Work', looking at aspects of care and use of paperwork for the internal verification process, with agreement to provide support for the development of training programmes.

As part of a 'learning raid' initiative organised by the Black Country LSC, Combined Healthcare ran a workshop for training providers from the Black Country area for a site visit and to receive a presentation on how to manage quality assurance, the structure of the internal training scheme and preparations for ALL inspections. Feedback from the learning raid was positive, with a request to run a similar event next year.

Combined Healthcare has considered setting up systems aimed at engaging minority ethnic groups. To that end, it is working with Fresherwise, a new training

provider which is looking to engage young people from the ethnic community. We are working together to set up complete systems from the beginning of the process, including the establishment of policies, the need to carry out risk assessments and the need to evidence trainee progression.

Combined Healthcare is currently looking to provide specific support to individual providers across a range of areas including key skills, planning and delivery of training, leadership and management and internal audits. Preliminary meetings to assess the possibility of adopting Combined Healthcare's internal training scheme have taken place with Shropshire LSC and Leicester General Hospital. Other organisations currently in discussion with Combined Healthcare are Charter Training, City of Stoke-on-Trent Recreational Services, Nottingham University, Nursery Network, Rockhouse, Axia Solutions, the YMCA and CF Associates. Combined Healthcare has attended conferences and gave a presentation to cadet leaders for the workforce development confederation on training schemes and links with the LSC.

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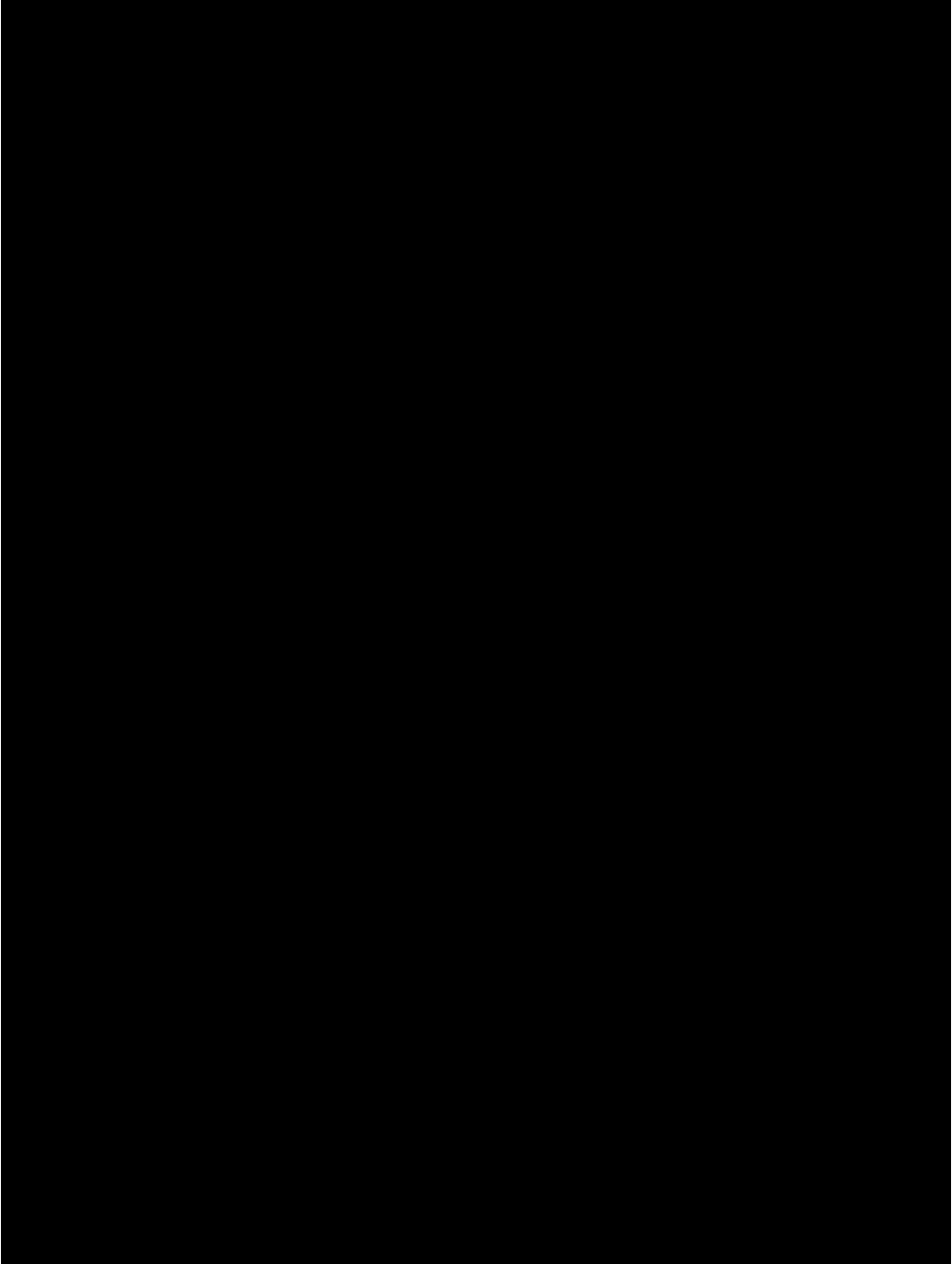
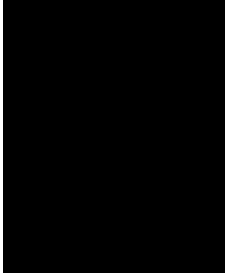


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Sara Hunter
Head of Personal
Development

General Information

The Royal Artillery Vocational Qualification Cell (VQ Cell) is an employer provider based on Salisbury Plain, Wiltshire. It is established as a charitable trust. The VQ Cell is responsible for identifying and delivering civilian qualifications for its 9,500 employees, who are based in regiments in the UK and Germany. The learning programmes include Apprenticeships and NVQs in engineering, logistics and Horse Care. Approximately 250 learners are enrolled on LSC-funded NVQ and MA programmes at any one time. In addition, the VQ Cell employs a staff of 15 information technology tutors based in regiments in UK and Germany. They are responsible for delivering IT qualifications including the Computer Literacy and Information Technology (CLAIT) suite and European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL) together with providing general support for Royal Artillery soldiers in their Personal Development. Each learning centre is a leardirect centre.

The VQ Cell will shortly embark upon an extensive basic skills programme to assess new recruits and support them throughout their early careers.

Areas of Outstanding Practice Identified at Inspection

Key strengths

- good retention and achievement rates
- good on- and off-the-job training
- excellent courses
- good initial assessment process
- good strategic planning of training
- good staff development
- consistent recruitment of women into training
- effective management of quality assurance at all sites.

The VQ Cell offers learners the opportunity to gain additional qualifications and progress to higher level qualifications. Training resources are excellent. Learners are trained and assessed only on the equipment that they would use operationally. Initial assessment is thorough and effective. Welfare support for learners is extensive.

There is good strategic planning of training programmes and all interested groups are involved in this process. Training is effectively managed, and learners' progress is closely monitored and well recorded.

Staff receive good opportunities for personal development. Equal opportunities are excellent. There is a commitment to ensuring equality of opportunity throughout the organisation. There is good recruitment of women and the proportion of learners from minority ethnic groups is steadily increasing. All learners receive annual training in equal opportunities.

Summary of Dissemination Project

The dissemination project covers a range of activities in areas in which the VQ Cell was judged to be strong. The activities fulfil the following criteria:

- to develop understanding amongst weaker providers of the rationale for the Beacon activity and its benefits to their learners and staff;
- to provide weaker providers with the tools to adapt the activity to suit their own requirements; and
- to support the weaker provider in implementing the changes required to improve performance.

The main areas of focus that the dissemination project is addressing are: weak assessment and internal verification practice; poor on-the-job and off-the-job training; and weak strategic management, governance and planning. The VQ Cell is able to bring particular expertise to improving the management and governance of public sector and charitable organisations.

The medium of delivery for the activities is varied and includes workshops and one-to-one consultancy. The audience consists of a number of work based training providers who are located in the South West region. Some have charitable status, and all have been identified by the ALI and LSC as requiring support in one or more areas. The expected outcomes of the dissemination activity are improvement in the particular area of support. The response so far is positive; initial contacts indicate that providers appreciate support from other 'operational' providers who face the same difficulties.

Additionally, the VQ Cell is organising a one-day conference for telecommunications providers. The aim of the event is to raise standards across the industry and key players from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA), LSC and

awarding bodies have agreed to participate. It is hoped to provide follow-up support to those providers who require it.

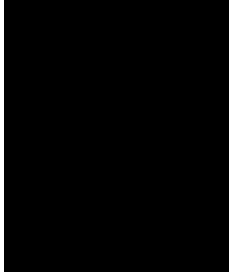
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Cheryl Hadland

General Information

Established in 1990, Tops Day Nurseries Training Centre Ltd is a private training company, with five day nurseries and four play clubs catering for children aged 0-13 years in Bournemouth, Poole, Wareham, Winchester and Wimborne. It currently employs over 130 staff and provides work based training primarily, but not exclusively, to its own employees. All learners are able to work towards Advanced Modern Apprenticeships and NVQs 2, 3 and 4 in early years care and education and playwork; assessor, verifier and learning and development qualifications, Key Skills and management courses. There is good learner support, with the provision of a comprehensive induction to the training programme and the workplace, regular and effective assessment and good monitoring of progress through regular progress reviews. Many of the learners working for the company have progressed to management or assessing positions in the nurseries.

Areas of Outstanding Practice Identified at Inspection

Key strengths

- good career progression for apprentices
- high NVQ achievement rates
- high retention rates for apprentices
- good support for apprentices and staff from senior management
- well-planned training sessions
- good staff development.

The ALI Inspection on 22 May 2001 judged that: Quality of the work based training and learning is outstanding and the leadership and management is good... training is well organised and there are opportunities for apprentices and staff to work towards additional qualifications. Tops achieved a grade 1 for its work based learning for young people and a grade 2 for leadership and management. In partnership with the local LSC, Tops is delivering dissemination activity in the areas listed above.

The dissemination activity may take the form of consultancy support, participation in national events, and availability of online material.

Summary of Dissemination Project

The dissemination proposal is focused around four key activities: sharing good practice with local providers of childcare/early years Modern Apprenticeship; sharing good practice nationally; production of online materials and advice; and delivery of research and development support.

Tops will share good practice with local providers of childcare/early years training. In conjunction with the local LSC, Tops will identify two childcare training providers requiring support in order to improve their practice. It will work with these providers to identify clear areas of need which match the particular strengths of Tops Day Nurseries as identified in inspection.

Tops will also be involved with sharing good practice nationally. There will be attendance at national events to promote good practice, including the LSDA Work based Learning Quality Support Network and National Day Nurseries Association events.

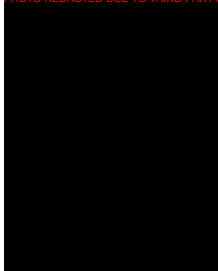
Tops will develop online materials and advice: a new website will include a download facility with documentation available on areas of good practice. It will also include a dedicated e-mail address for queries, feedback and an advice service. The new website is accessed via the 'Training' button.

There will be support for research and development through part-funding of a post, with particular reference to e-learning, to support good practice dissemination and strategic planning for expansion while maintaining quality.

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David Humphries
Vice Principal

General Information

Truro College was established in 1993 as a new tertiary college to meet the needs of learners in Truro and the surrounding area.

In the 10 years since then, the college has more than quadrupled in size and currently has 2,600 full-time and 8,600 part-time learners on FE and adult recreational programmes. A further 430 full-time and 200 part-time students are following a variety of HE programmes. Similarly, the range of courses offered has expanded.

To ensure sufficient high quality accommodation for all students, the college has achieved four major capital build projects and two more are currently underway, all on the main site. In addition, the college has purchased three buildings on other sites to meet the needs of some HE courses, and to provide better access to open and distance learning students.

Programmes offered to full-time students include:

- International Baccalaureate;
- BTEC national diplomas in 14 areas;
- AVCE (double award) in four areas;
- GCE A-level and AS-level in 46 subjects;
- private secretarial and administration programmes;
- diploma and certificate in childcare and education;
- GNVQ intermediates in five areas;
- BTEC first diplomas in four areas;
- foundation level vocational access programmes;
- programmes for students with severe learning difficulties and for profoundly disabled students;
- access to HE in four areas; and
- some NVQs and specific City and guilds programmes (for example, hairdressing, sound engineering).

Approximately 45% of full-time students are on the GCE A-level course. Another 35% of students are on Level 3 vocational programmes. Truro College is a Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) in care.

The college was inspected in September 2001 under the new Common Inspection Framework and awarded Beacon status in June 2002.

Mission of the College

The purpose of the college is to provide the best possible learning experience, leading to the highest level of achievements by our students.

Truro College has a clear sense of purpose and has enjoyed extremely successful initial years of operation. Courses have recruited well, the local reputation of the college is high, the response of students and of members of the local community has been very positive and staff have worked with skill, energy and commitment.

The environment in which colleges operate continues to change, and Truro is intent on responding positively to the opportunities that change presents. At the same time, we are keen both to maintain the clarity of focus that has enabled us to develop towards Beacon status and to seek continuously to find ways of improving the experience that we offer our students.

Areas of Outstanding Practice Identified at Inspection

- outstanding rates on many courses;
- good retention rates for students aged 16 to 18
- effective teaching and learning in all curriculum areas
- strong leadership and management;
- excellent equipment and accommodation
- rigorous and fair assessment of students' work
- effective guidance, enrolment, induction and tutorial support for full-time students
- wide range of courses and enrichment activities
- well-organised and effective work based learning.

After inspection by Ofsted and the ALLI, Truro College was judged as giving outstanding provision in seven curriculum areas. These were science, business, leisure/tourism and sport, health and social care, performing arts, English and foundation programmes. All other curriculum areas were graded as good. Leadership and management were judged to be outstanding.

Summary of Dissemination Project

The areas targeted for dissemination of good practice within the Beacon project are:

- improving the organisation of teaching teams (team leadership, communication, targets);
- individual learning planning and tutorial and cross-college student monitoring and support;
- college leadership and management: their role in supporting improvements in retention and achievement; and
- teaching and learning: the dissemination of good practice in using IT within the classroom.

We aim to work with curriculum teams from colleges where grades or comments on inspection suggest that improvements in curriculum team leadership might contribute to improvements in success rates.

We will look at the way in which the colleges work with individual students and trainees to monitor attendance and progress, set realistic and challenging personal targets and encourage and reward achievement to help raise standards.

Regarding college leadership and management, the concentration here will be on how the college culture, along with the effective development and use of management information systems, are central to intervention strategies across the college.

Inspectors reported on our good practice, across several curriculum areas, in the use

of IT equipment within the classroom. Our aim here is for practitioners to share good practice of how classroom teaching can be enlivened by access to learning materials through computer and whiteboard technology.

Since the start of the project, Truro College has been in contact with numerous other colleges and providers with a view to seeking specific support in one of the areas as indicated above. Many have requested that their key staff visit Truro College to investigate what we do and discuss approaches, procedures and materials with the people in the college who deal with the same tasks. For these people, we have offered one-day workshops designed to respond to their needs. Some colleges have economised on transport and brought several colleagues at the same time, each to consider a different aspect.

Others have asked that members of our staff visit their college to contribute to staff development activity or to meet with appropriate teams. In this respect, our aim has been to identify the issue to be addressed and to ensure that the most appropriate member of our staff attends and is well briefed to offer support.

Throughout this type of event we have found that it is possible to focus on each college's circumstances, exploring how we operate and whether what we do is wholly or partially transferable. We make no claims to the effect that our systems and approaches will work in any situation, nor do we claim to know all the answers. However, we have been helpful in

asking questions and offering ideas and examples of those approaches which work well for us.

College staff who have been most involved have been the principal and vice-principal, quality manager, MIS manager, director of student services and programme team leaders. Key support staff and lecturers, for example in the use of ICT in the classroom, have been brought in as required.

Colleges report that they have found the interaction with Truro College and its staff to be variously interesting, positive and useful in adding to the framework against which they make judgements about their own activity, or review their own approach to certain issues. Generally, the sessions have inspired many ideas and the contacts made by individuals have been reinforced by the exchange of e-mail addresses and telephone numbers which will act as the basis for further discussion and support.

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Ministerial Learning and Skills Beacons

General Further Education Colleges

Barnfield College

Sixth Form Colleges

Alton College

Barton Peveril College

Carmel College

John Leggott College

King George V College

Hills Road Sixth Form College

The Sixth Form College Colchester

The Sixth Form College Farnborough

Woodhouse College

Wyggeston and Queen Elizabeth I College

Tertiary Colleges

Bridgwater College

Truro College

Work Based Learning Providers

James Beattie Plc

Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service

Lex Harvey Ltd

Luton Borough Council

MG Rover Group

NG Bailey & Co

North Staffordshire Combined Healthcare NHS Trust

Royal Artillery Vocational Qualification Cell

S&B Training

Summerhouse Education and Equitation Centre

Tops Day Nursery

UpperCut Hair Salons Limited

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Ministerial award of Learning and Skills Beacon status

A review of the criteria and arrangements is currently underway and it is intended that Beacon status will be extended across the full range of providers funded by the LSC and inspected by the Ofsted and the ALI. (A complete listing of Beacons is supplied in Annex A).

Ministers award Learning and Skills Beacon status and there is no application process. To be given consideration a college or provider will need to have achieved high quality inspection results in reports published after April 2001:

- Grade 1 in one third of curriculum areas;
- Grade 1 or 2 in another third of curriculum areas;
- Grade 3 or better in the remaining third of curriculum areas, with no grade 4 or 5 in curriculum areas;
- Grade 1 or 2 in leadership and management.

The DfES also seeks the recommendations of the LSC in relation to the suitability of candidates for Learning and Skills Beacon status. This will include the assessment of their willingness and capacity to share good practice and participate in collaborative partnership activity. Evidence from the LSC performance review categorisation informs the LSC recommendations.

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This publication is available in an electronic form on the Council's website: www.lsc.gov.uk

Publication enquiries: 0870 900 6800

Reference MISC/0631/03



Learning+Skills Council