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Health and social care: good practice post-16

**Better
education
and care**

This report presents factors which enable post-16 learners to make good progress in the area of health and social care. Between September 2005 and February 2006, inspectors visited 24 providers where provision had been judged to be good or outstanding at their last inspection. Examples of good practice are illustrated with case studies, and recommendations for improvement are made.

Of particular interest to: heads of department of health and social care and senior managers in schools and colleges.

Age group
Post-16

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Executive summary

The survey was conducted to identify features which enabled post-16 learners to make good progress in the area of health and social care.

Between September 2005 and February 2006, Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and inspectors from the Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) visited 24 schools and colleges where Ofsted had identified good provision in health and social care. All the schools and most of the colleges visited had maintained or improved upon the high standards observed at their previous inspection.

The number of learners who completed their courses successfully had increased and progression to higher level courses and employment were very good, particularly from courses in early years. Very few of the learners who began a course in health and social care subsequently changed direction, demonstrating the effectiveness of the guidance they had been given.

Many of the schools and colleges did not do enough to assess learners' progress in relation to their GCSE achievements and few of them collected or analysed data to show whether learners who entered employment did so at a level which was consistent with their knowledge and skills.

Much of the teaching seen in the schools and colleges was good. Teachers were particularly good at relating theory to learners' experiences on work placement. Many of the schools and colleges provided an excellent variety of placements and these were managed well. Learners who used computers in lessons spent much of their time recording and presenting work rather than developing more advanced computing skills.

The extensive range of courses in health, social care and early years provided learners with good choice and plenty of opportunities for progression. General further education (FE) colleges, in particular, provided courses which were matched well to community needs. Although the schools visited provided fewer courses, progression was still good where they had effective links with other post-16 providers.

The management of key skills and test results in key skills at level 1 and level 2 had improved. Colleges paid much greater attention to the wider key skills of improving own learning and performance, problem solving and working with others because of their relevance to careers in health, care and early years.

The four schools visited paid much less attention to qualifications in key skills. In most cases, learners who had not achieved a grade C at GCSE in English and mathematics had the opportunity to re-take the examination in the sixth form, but there was no clear strategy to improve the functional literacy and numeracy of learners on sixth form health and social care courses.

Schools and colleges paid close attention to learners' personal development and well-being through lessons, tutorials and placements. Guidance and support

were outstanding and contributed significantly to learners' success, particularly for those with low levels of attainment.

Leadership and management were very good and teamwork was excellent. Difficulties with recruiting well qualified and experienced teachers had receded in colleges because good training and development were enabling part-time teachers to prepare for full-time teaching. The majority of teachers in the colleges had practical experience in a care setting, but this was rare in the schools visited.

Many colleges had outstanding links with the community and employers. They used these to develop provision which helped to fill local skills gaps in care professions. Links with National Health Service (NHS) trusts were particularly strong. The management of work-based learning had improved and more apprentices were completing the apprenticeship framework on time.

Key findings

- ❑ Effective advice about courses and employment in health and social care meant that, once learners had chosen such a course, they generally completed it and progressed to higher level courses, higher education or employment in care.
- ❑ Many schools and colleges did not accurately assess learners' progress in relation to their starting points.
- ❑ Few schools and colleges collected or analysed data to show whether learners who entered employment did so at a level which was consistent with their knowledge and skills.
- ❑ Good systems for monitoring and improving teaching helped teachers to use resources effectively and also ensured that part-time teachers were as effective as full-time teachers.
- ❑ Learners who used computers in lessons spent much of their time in recording and presenting work rather than developing more advanced computing skills.
- ❑ Effective preparation of learners for work placements helped to secure good quality placements, and learners gained more from them.
- ❑ The colleges offered a good range of courses, with clear routes between courses at different levels. The schools in the survey offered fewer courses, so good relationships with post-16 providers were important in giving learners sufficient options.
- ❑ Academic and personal support and guidance, including effective additional learning support, contributed significantly to learners' success, particularly for those with low levels of attainment.
- ❑ Most of the schools and colleges had experienced low staff turnover. Discontinuities in teaching in the remainder had resulted in learners' achievements declining.

- All colleges and most schools had worked closely with employers to develop provision which helps to fill skills gaps in the care profession. Three of the colleges had very successful links with their local NHS trusts.

Recommendations

The survey identified aspects of provision in health and social care which needed further development in the majority of schools and colleges visited, even though the overall quality of their provision in health and social care was good or better.

Colleges and schools should:

- collect and analyse information on learners' progression into employment to ensure that learners enter employment at a level which does justice to their qualifications and skills
- make better use of measures to assess the progress of learners in relation to their starting points
- ensure that learners develop more advanced computing skills instead of using computers solely for recording and presenting work.

Learners' achievement

1. Most students in the schools and colleges visited had been provided with excellent opportunities to explore issues fundamental to professional practice and had used them effectively to cultivate a deep appreciation of the care value base. Students following intermediate and advanced level courses in particular had a good understanding of the ethical and philosophical issues of confidentiality as well as the practicalities of maintaining confidentiality within different care settings. Students were producing good, objective observations within which they reflected on their own practice and were able to demonstrate an awareness of and sensitivity to the diverse nature of the client groups they worked with.
2. Once learners had chosen to follow a course in health and care, they generally completed it and either entered employment within the care sector or progressed to a higher level course in care. Internal progression between foundation and intermediate level courses was good, but more learners chose to progress to a higher level course than to enter employment or join an apprenticeship scheme.
3. Progression between intermediate and advanced level courses had formerly been a weakness in health and care. This was not the case in the colleges visited. Teachers gave careful attention to enabling learners to become independent and equipping them with the skills they required to transfer smoothly to more advanced work.
4. Progression to higher education was good, particularly to teacher training, nursing degrees and diplomas. Schools and colleges monitored internal

progression carefully but made little use of measures to assess the progress of learners in relation to their GCSE achievements. Few of the schools or colleges in the survey collected or analysed data to indicate whether learners who entered employment had done so at a level which was commensurate with their knowledge and skills.

5. Assessment and internal verification procedures were thorough and reliable. There was a strong emphasis on making sure that learners understood what was expected of them and giving them the teaching and support they needed to meet expectations. Learners received assessment plans at the beginning of their course to help them to manage their time. Course leaders previewed all briefs for assignments to make sure that they were vocationally relevant, drew on evidence gained from work placement experience and made it clear to learners what they needed to do to complete all the tasks and achieve high grades. Key skills were integrated where appropriate. Detailed written feedback, including corrections to spelling, grammar and punctuation, made it clear what learners needed to do to improve their work.
6. Much improved achievements in key skills tests and the building of portfolios showed that learners were beginning to recognise the importance of key skills for their progress and employment. However, the lack of recognition given to key skills by some higher education institutions meant that schools and colleges concentrated on improving GCSE results in mathematics and English instead. Learners were generally advised to take an additional qualification at AS or A level instead of key skills at level 3; the number of learners who entered for key skills level 3 qualifications was very low.

The quality of provision

7. All the schools and colleges visited placed a strong emphasis on improving the quality of teaching. The colleges generally had robust procedures for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of teaching, including lesson observations, staff mentoring and reviews of course quality. Although these arrangements were less developed in the schools, the quality of the teaching, when measured by the achievement and progression of learners, was as effective. Classes in schools for courses in health and care had fewer learners than in colleges.
8. The use of information learning technology (ILT) in lessons had improved; recent annual reports by Her Majesty's Chief Inspector have identified this as a weakness in the past. Teachers' access to equipment had improved and they were more confident about using it. Nevertheless, although learners were using computers more frequently in lessons, they spent much of this time recording and presenting work rather than developing more advanced computing skills.

Case study 1: using ILT to promote better learning

A sixth form college used ILT very effectively to promote learning. As well as good ILT hardware, the department had a well developed intranet site that learners valued highly. They could gain access to it from home to use course and assignment information, resources such as handouts, core notes, revision exercises and online tests. They could also email their teachers and tutors to ask for help or arrange to see them. Many teaching rooms had banks of modern computers that learners could use for individual or group tasks, such as online checks of information including statistics, legislation and relevant news stories, or for carrying out tasks set on the intranet.

ILT was a key part of most lessons. Most teaching rooms were equipped with data projectors and interactive whiteboards. Teachers used the interactive whiteboards efficiently and effectively to:

- ensure that learners understood the targets for the lesson
 - present information, including video extracts, photographs and documents on the intranet
 - check learning activities
 - brief learners on small group work tasks
 - present the outcomes of learners' work.
9. The most effective teaching drew on learners' experience on work placements. The range and quality of these were significant factors in the extent to which learners enjoyed their courses and were prepared successfully for employment.

Case study 2: tailoring work placements to learners' needs

A school's health and social care department established a strong relationship with a group of local employers who provided placements. This meant that placements could be tailored to learners' specific needs. Learners received valuable guidance during the school placement supervisors' weekly visits, enabling them to make good use of their experience in illustrating theory and preparing them well for assignments. Good links between theory and practice were a feature of subsequent lessons.

10. Schools and colleges with good provision in health and social care experienced fewer difficulties in finding placements: employers knew that the learners would be well prepared, have clearly identified objectives for the placement and would be monitored carefully by college staff.

Case study 3: work placement with children with moderate learning difficulties

First year learners on the national diploma course in health and social care at a general FE college undertook a placement in their first term with children with moderate learning difficulties. The learners worked for half a day each week with their teacher and a group of children, focusing on preparing the children for a Christmas show. Work started in September because it had been decided that it would take this length of time for the children to learn and develop the skills and confidence they would need to take part. Learners worked with the same child each week, helping them to develop a good relationship. They learned how to deal with the child's complex needs, emotions, and sometimes unusual behaviour. All of the work was cross-referenced to the requirements for key skills in communication. The learners dressed up in costume to match the part 'their' child was taking in the show. Learners showed maturity, knowledge and understanding well beyond that expected at their stage of training. Their evaluations provided teachers with useful feedback about how to develop the project with other learners.

11. The schools and colleges frequently provided more time on placements than awarding bodies required. The majority of the colleges surveyed had moved from block release arrangements to weekly placements because this provided more continuity for the learners and created less disruption to other parts of learners' programmes, such as key skills and enrichment.

Case study 4: work placement in a hospital

A general FE college which had been awarded full Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) status for health and care had developed a strong partnership with its local NHS trust. This helped the college to provide a valuable range of placements to enhance learning for full-time learners on health and social care courses.

Each learner had a record of achievement to complete during their time in their given ward or department. The skills required for any specific area were carefully explained by hospital staff, with any additional training given before the placement. Learners who had reached the age of 18 were assessed for specific manual handling skills before working to provide personal care. The completed record of achievement was signed and dated by the learner and the named mentor on the ward or department. Learners were given the opportunity to attend training events and seminars at the hospital, visit an operating theatre, shadow work in a range of departments including Accident and Emergency, and visit the mortuary as part of a session on bereavement and bereavement counselling. Regular

meetings with the college's placement consultants and a representative of the NHS trust monitored individuals' progress and that of the full cohort of learners. The outcome of learners' questionnaires and reports from mentors informed future placements. The core values of care including respect, privacy and dignity, confidentiality and health and safety were key elements in preparing learners for these placements within the trust.

12. The colleges visited provided a broad range of courses in health, social care and early years at foundation to advanced level which reflected the needs of the communities which they served.

Case study 5: community links and curriculum development

Productive community links enabled one sixth form college to complete an effective analysis of local community training needs in childcare which resulted in extensive curriculum development. Unusually, the department had the services of a consultant coordinator for a day and a half a week to carry out needs analysis, foster and respond to community education and training needs. Good links with the local authority, schools, Surestart, and local and regional care networks resulted in developing much needed education and training that was efficient and of good quality. Many long and short courses were successfully developed in response to identified needs. Although the focus had been on childcare so far, the department was beginning to investigate health and social care provision with other colleges through the Learning and Skills Council's (LSC) forum on skills for care.

13. The schools in the survey offered fewer courses, but progression was good where they had effective links with other local FE and HE providers which offered a more extensive range of courses. In colleges, learners spent at least two hours weekly on additional qualifications or enrichment activities. Additional qualifications included options such as first aid, food hygiene, food and nutrition, health and safety, moving and handling, British sign language and community volunteer awards. These aimed to improve learners' potential for employment. Apart from sporting and recreational activities, there were good programmes of visiting speakers and most A-level learners in colleges received training in risk assessment and disability awareness. Learners in schools were timetabled more fully for their main course and had fewer opportunities to gain additional qualifications or undertake enrichment activities.
14. An increasing number of the colleges in the survey were involved in provision for apprenticeship schemes. The management and coordination of work-based learning were much improved, as well as the success rates in completing the apprenticeship framework on time. In the colleges visited, most apprentices had entered full-time employment once they had completed the framework.

15. Arrangements for key skills varied considerably between colleges, but most teachers recognised the value of integrating key skills within the vocational context. Sometimes the key skills were taught by care specialists who had been trained in key skills: this worked well. In other colleges, key skills were taught by specialist key skills teachers. The success of this approach depended on the quality of the liaison between the key skills teachers and the subject specialists.

Case study 6: initial assessment of key skills and individual learning plans

At one sixth form college, all learners were screened on entry to determine their current level of key skills. Subsequent monitoring led to a review of their individual learning plans and the revision of their personal learning targets. The college ensured that all learners gained GCSE mathematics and English or level 2 communication, application of number and IT. Learners on level 3 courses were encouraged to achieve one key skill at level 3.

The teaching team worked closely with a key skills specialist to ensure that all key skills assignments were vocationally relevant. This specialist teacher attended lessons to verify the course work as evidence to be included in portfolios. Experience in the workplace was used effectively to reinforce the importance of key skills. As a result, attendance at key skills lessons for the application of number (AON) and information and communication technology (ICT) had improved and success rates were higher than in previous years.

16. Colleges recognised that the wider key skills of improving one's own performance and working with others provided opportunities for developing essential skills for employment in care and the early years. In a minority of colleges, learners' acquisition of these skills was monitored against the outcomes of the Every Child Matters agenda.
17. In the schools visited, key skills were not given such a high priority in the health and care courses. Learners were required to retake GCSE mathematics and English if they had not been successful, but there was much less integrated provision to enable learners to improve their functional literacy and numeracy.

Learners' personal development and well-being

18. Most health and care courses provided learners with a secure foundation for enhancing their personal development and well-being. Successful schools and colleges used information from individual learning plans to monitor learners' progress in personal development against the outcomes of the Every Child Matters agenda. They reported that learners were very satisfied with the provision made. Attendance and retention on health and care courses were good.

19. Transition was straightforward in schools: the teachers already knew the learners well before they began their course in the sixth form. The colleges worked hard to secure good links with the schools from which learners transferred and provided good specialist guidance and support for potential learners.

Case study 7: good support through links between sixth form college and schools

The roots of the exceptionally good support for learners at one sixth form college lay in the close partnership between the college and local schools. The college had 17 partner schools and guaranteed a place at the college for each school leaver. Teachers got to know the pupils who were intending to follow health and care courses while they were still at school and ensured that they had extensive guidance, not only about the college and its courses but also about the demands of careers in care. Records indicated that the few learners who did not complete their course successfully had begun it late or joined the college from a non-partner school.

20. Teachers provided excellent support. Tutorials were well managed and enabled learners to review the quality of work with their teachers. Learners who received additional learning support in literacy and numeracy were just as successful as those who did not.

Leadership and management

21. In the schools and colleges visited, effective leadership and management had led to improving standards. Health and social care teams in colleges worked with a clear sense of purpose to make provision inclusive and to make sure that all learners were successful. Most of the colleges visited analysed carefully information on the progress of learners from different minority groups, learners with disabilities, and those receiving learning support. There were no substantial differences between the achievements of different groups of learners. The number of male learners following health and care courses in colleges was low, but those who did enrol stayed on the course and achieved just as well as female learners. In the schools, the teaching teams were much smaller and standards were more dependent on the effectiveness of the head of department.
22. Many of the colleges visited had outstanding links with the community and employers. Their provision helped to fill local skills gaps in care professions. Links with NHS trusts were particularly strong.

Case study 8: mapping training and development needs

Extensive market research and a needs analysis carried out by staff at the Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) at one general FE college resulted in the production of an up-to-date map of training

and development needs locally. Consequently staff were able to develop information packs for employers, organise employer forums and join employers' management boards. This good practice in consulting and communicating with employers had a positive impact on full-time courses, extending the range of good quality work placements and enrichment activities for learners.

23. Teachers were well qualified and experienced. In this survey, some 65% of the teachers were graduates and a further 27% had achieved a Certificate in Education. Successful departments enjoyed stable staffing. Disruptions to staffing, however, resulted in a decline in standards. Full-time teachers had, on average, 15 years' teaching experience and part-time teachers eight years. Most of the teachers in the colleges had practical experience in a care setting, but this was rare in the schools. Although this did not affect the quality of the teaching, it made it more difficult for schools to extend their provision in health and care because teachers did not have sufficient breadth of experience. Difficulties with recruiting well qualified and experienced teachers had receded in colleges because they provided good training and development, enabling part-time teachers to prepare for full-time teaching roles. A higher proportion of teaching was done by teachers on part-time contracts in general FE colleges than in sixth form colleges. In schools, very little teaching was done by staff on part-time contracts. Overall there was little difference in the quality of teaching of full-time and part-time teachers.
24. Good access to staff development and training programmes had enabled teachers to improve their teaching. Opportunities for professional updating, however, were much more variable and few teachers undertook care placements as part of this.
25. The standard of accommodation and resources for health and social care courses had improved as enrolments increased. Learners had good access to computers in their base rooms to supplement equipment available in learning resource centres. The majority of the schools visited used accommodation which had been designed for domestic science rather than care. Although it was well maintained, it restricted the activities which teachers were able to plan.

Notes

The survey was conducted between September 2005 and February 2006 by Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and inspectors from the Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI). A sample of 24 schools and colleges was selected, comprising 14 general FE and tertiary colleges, six sixth form colleges and four schools. All of them had provision in health and social care which had been judged to be good or outstanding at their last Ofsted inspection. In 23 of the colleges and schools, standards in health and care had been maintained or improved. The survey information was supplemented by evidence drawn from recent inspection reports from schools and colleges where health and social care provision had been inspected.

Further information

Curriculum area reports on 'Health, social care and public services' are part of the *Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools 2004/05* (0102935459), Ofsted, 2005.

www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/annualreport0405/annual_report.html

Further information on qualifications in health and social care can be found at the website of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority:

www.qca.org.uk

Further information on outcomes in health and social care for learners in post-16 education and training in England can be found in the Statistical First Release from the Department for Education and Skills:

Further education and work based learning for young people – learner outcomes in England 2004/05 (ILR/SFR 10), DfES, 2006.

Annex

List of schools and colleges participating in the survey

General FE and tertiary colleges

Birmingham College of Food, Tourism and Creative Studies

Brockenhurst College

Burnley College

Exeter College

Keighley College

Kidderminster College

North Devon College

Plymouth College of Further Education

South Cheshire College

South Devon College

Stamford College

Truro College

Walsall College c.o. St Paul's Campus

West Nottinghamshire College

Sixth form colleges

Ashton-under-Lyne Sixth Form College

Franklin College

Hartlepool Sixth Form College

Itchen College

Loreto College, Manchester

Schools

Grange Technology College, Bradford

Hamstead Hall School, Birmingham

Menzies High School, Sandwell

Weatherhead High School Media Arts College, Wirral