

**Follow-up review
Coatbridge College
25 April 2008**

The follow-up review process

HM Inspectors undertake an independent review of the quality of provision in colleges on behalf of the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) under a service level agreement between the Council and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE). Review teams include HM Inspectors, associate assessors and a student team member or lay member.

Each review, based on a proportionate model, has inter-related phases: *review phase one* and the *follow-through phase*. During *review phase one*, review teams evaluate the *learning and teaching process, learner progress and outcomes* and *leadership and quality management*. The outcome of this phase informs the scope of the *follow-through phase*. Review teams explore good practice that may have potential for wider dissemination across the sector. They also explore further as appropriate, the causes, impact and extent of significant weaknesses identified in *review phase one*.

Where HM Inspectors have stated that they are *not confident* in one or more of the key areas of *the learning and teaching process, learner progress and outcomes, or leadership and quality management*, SFC requires a further *follow-up review*, which is proportionate and specific to that college. This report details the findings of the team of HM Inspectors that undertook the *follow-up review* of Coatbridge College.

During this *follow-up review*, members of the review team observed learning and teaching and held discussions with learners and staff. They also examined information on learner retention and attainment levels as part of evaluating the progress the college had made in respect of the *not confident* statement which pertained to *learner progress and outcomes* and the weaknesses identified in the 2005 review.

This report contains a confidence statement that expresses the review team's overall evaluation of *learner progress and outcomes*. It also contains grades for the four areas of subject provision reviewed.

This report uses the following word scale to make clear the evaluations made by subject review teams.

Very good	major strengths
Good	strengths outweigh weaknesses
Fair	some important weaknesses
Unsatisfactory	major weaknesses

The report uses the following evaluation scale to make clear the progress the college has made against *main points for action*.

This was satisfactory progress	The college has made satisfactory progress in addressing the main point for action. Actions are appropriate and have had a positive impact.
This was satisfactory progress, overall	The college has made good progress in addressing the main point for action. However, the pace of progress has been too slow.
This was not satisfactory progress	The college has made insufficient progress in addressing the main point for action.

The report also uses the following words to describe numbers and proportions

almost all	over 90%
most	75-90%
majority	50-74%
more than a few	15-49%
few	up to 15%

You can find more information on the work of HMIE and its role in Scottish education on our website: www.hmie.gov.uk. The website will give you easy access to review and inspections reports and a wide range of other publications.

Contents	Page
1. Introduction	1
The college and its context	1
2. The follow-up review	2
Scope of the follow-up review	2
Summary of grades awarded in subject areas	3
3. Overall findings in subject areas	4
Learning and teaching process	4
Learner progress and outcomes	5
Other significant factors	5
4. Findings in individual subject areas	6
Care	6
Computing and ICT	8
Performing arts	10
Science	12
5. Progress on main points for action	14
Educational provision: design, planning and management	14
Learner services, resources and staff	17
Quality assurance, improvement and enhancement	21
Overall conclusion	23
6. Example of sector-leading and innovative practice	24
7. What happens next?	25
8. How can you contact us?	26
Appendices	
Glossary of terms	27
The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework	28

1. Introduction

The college and its context

In carrying out the follow-up review of Coatbridge College, HMIE took the following college context fully into account.

Coatbridge College, established in 1891, has operated from its main campus, the *South Building*, in Kildonan Street, Coatbridge since 1934. The *North Extension* opened in 1982. In August 2006, the college opened the refurbished nursery which provides 59 full-time equivalent places.

Employing 363 staff (200 FTE), the college provides education and training for approximately 7,200 learners, most of whom reside in the adjacent towns of Coatbridge and Airdrie. Areas of high deprivation are prevalent within both towns. In partnership with other Lanarkshire colleges, the college has received funding to target and address exclusion and economic inactivity in the surrounding communities, with a particular focus on skills, geographic exclusion and those within the *More Choices, More Chances* group. The allocation of 16% of the total funding has resulted in an additional 186 enrolments of learners from targeted groups to date.

The college delivers full-time and part-time programmes in the subject areas of automotive and transport, beauty and complementary therapies, business and information technology, care, computing and creative technologies, dental, hairdressing and make-up artistry, performing arts and science. Since the 2005 review, the college had redesigned its curriculum, making changes to provision in a number of areas and significant change in the area of computing and ICT. In response to the recent increase in migrant workers in the area, the college delivers ESOL programmes to over 350 learners.

The development of successful partnerships with schools, other colleges, community learning and development groups and Scottish Enterprise has led to wider participation in the college's curriculum by local learners. Flexible arrangements have allowed part-time learners from across North Lanarkshire and beyond to access programmes. As a result, enrolments have increased by 16% over the last two years. Working closely with local partners, the college delivers programmes in community venues across North Lanarkshire. As well as a growing SVQ provision at levels 2 and 3, the college, in partnership with local schools and the local authority, has delivered programmes to over 1100 school pupils during the last year. The college has developed a range of articulation arrangements with HEIs and, in partnership with the University of the West of Scotland, delivers the third year of the university's BA Business degree from the *South Building*.

The college has continued to address obligations arising from the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 within the current estate and it has received upfront funding from the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) in support of a new estate. The first stage of its £38 million estates strategy consists of a £25 million plan to refurbish the *South Building*. The planned construction date for this phase is Summer 2009.

The college's revenue budget for 2006-07 was £11 million, with grant-in-aid from SFC accounting for 73% of the total.

2. The follow-up review

2.1 Scope of the follow-up review

The *follow-up review* by HMIE took place in the week beginning 10 December 2007.

The follow-up review revisited the *not confident* statement from the 2005 review in relation to *learner progress and outcomes*. It also covered four subject areas in the college, together with a focus on core skills and flexible learning, as follows.

Care
Computing and ICT
Performing arts
Science

These areas, in which the provision ranged from levels 1 to 8 of the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF), accounted for more than 50% of the college's work.

The follow-up review team also examined progress on the 17 *main points for action* reported in the review which took place in November 2005, related to key cross-college functions and processes that have a direct impact on the quality of the learner experience.

The follow-up review involved scrutiny of documentation provided by the college and interviews with senior and middle managers, Board of Management members with a responsibility for overseeing the work of committees concerned with educational issues and learners. The follow-up review team also explored and discussed fully the example of sector-leading and innovative practice identified in this report.

2.2 Summary of outcomes

HMIE is confident that learners are progressing well and achieving appropriate outcomes.

The college has made satisfactory progress in 14 of the 17 *main points for action*.

The college has made satisfactory progress, overall, in two of the 17 *main points for action*.

The college has not made satisfactory progress in one of the 17 *main points for action*.

2.3 Summary of grades awarded in subject areas

Subject Area	Learning and teaching process	Learner progress and outcomes
Care	Very good	Very good
Computing and ICT	Good	Very good
Performing arts	Good	Good
Science	Very good	Very good

3. Overall findings in subject areas

3.1 Learning and teaching process

- Almost all learners were well motivated and fully engaged, and participated well in the learning process in all subject areas.
- Most learners were developing appropriate levels of independence in their learning in all subject areas.
- Almost all learners had access to and made good use of an appropriate range of resources in most subject areas.
- Almost all learners were developing appropriate vocational skills and core skills and in most subject areas.
- All teaching staff used their subject knowledge and experience to good effect to enhance the teaching process in all subject areas.
- In most subjects, teaching staff used an appropriate range of teaching approaches effectively and appropriately to engage and develop learners' skills, knowledge and understanding.
- All teaching staff planned activities well in most subject areas.
- Learner-staff relationships were positive and constructive across all subject areas.
- In all subject areas, staff set appropriate standards for learners, which were consistent with their programme level.

However:

- In two subject areas, learners' poor punctuality disrupted the learning process for themselves and others.
- In two subject areas, teaching staff did not use ICT to good effect to develop learners' understanding and skills.
- Poor planning adversely affected the learning experience in computing and ICT programmes.

3.2 Learner progress and outcomes

HMIE is confident that learners are progressing well and achieving appropriate outcomes.

- Almost all learners made good progress in the development of their confidence and other personal skills.
- Almost all learners gained employability skills and an appropriate level of vocational skills on their programmes or through work placements.
- Most learners gained appropriate citizenship skills through a variety of relevant activities.
- Retention rates were high.
- Attainment rates were high in most subject areas.
- Almost all learners on programmes in science and programmes in computing and ICT successfully progressed to further study or employment.
- A few learners on science programmes had achieved significant success in national awards.

However:

- Programme attainment rates were low for full-time FE programmes in performing arts.

3.3 Other significant factors

The purpose of this section of the report is to summarise other factors which had a significant impact on the learning and teaching process, and learner progress and outcomes.

- Accommodation for computing and ICT was well equipped with industry-standard resources and an appropriate range of ICT teaching aids.
- In a few performing arts programmes, the scheduling of assessments was detrimental to retention and attainment.
- In care programmes, early opportunities for learners to renegotiate or change their programmes had resulted in provision that met learner needs.
- In the majority of subject areas, effective guidance and support arrangements, delivered by highly committed staff, had improved motivation, retention and attainment.

4. Findings in individual subject areas

This section of the report outlines key strengths and weaknesses relating to the learning and teaching process, learner progress and outcomes, and other significant factors in each of the subject areas reviewed.

4.1 Care

Learning and teaching process

Strengths

- Almost all learners were well motivated and enthusiastic about their studies. They engaged well in class activities and contributed confidently to class discussions.
- All learners used a wide range of resources effectively and almost all were confident in accessing learning material through the college intranet or recommended websites.
- Almost all learners reflected on and consolidated their learning to develop independent learning skills.
- Almost all learners were developing a good understanding of the vocational skills and values for care contexts.
- All staff used examples from their own experiences and the experiences of learners to provide links between lessons and across units.
- All staff used a wide range of teaching and learning strategies and resources which matched the varied learner needs.
- All staff encouraged and valued learner contributions to class discussion, and ensured that all learners were included.
- All staff provided prompt, detailed and constructive feedback on classwork and assessments. They helped learners evaluate their own performance on placement and in college and supported learner improvement.
- Relationships between staff and learners were highly positive in all classes.
- Staff planned lessons well and incorporated effective strategies to help learners develop employability and citizenship skills.

Weaknesses

- Staff had not planned and managed placements for social care learners effectively.
- Staff had not carried out formal health and safety risk assessments prior to learners commencing a work placement.

Learner progress and outcomes

Strengths

- Almost all learners achieved high standards in coursework and made good progress in core skills, building on prior achievement.
- Almost all learners gained personal and learning skills and skills for employment and citizenship.
- Almost all learners gained vocational skills and those on placement put these skills into practice effectively.
- Almost all learners were articulate and had gained confidence in oral communication and presentation skills.
- Attainment rates were high in almost all FE programmes.
- Attainment rates were high in almost all part-time HE programmes.
- Attainment rates were high in most full-time HE programmes and almost all part-time FE programmes.
- Retention rates were high in almost all HE programmes and part-time programmes.

Weakness

- Retention rates were low in more than a few full-time FE programmes.

Other significant factors

- Integration of units in health programmes was very effective in providing learners with a thematic and coherent experience, and in ensuring that they achieved basic skills in advance of undertaking placements.
- The redesign of a few programmes, and early opportunities for learners to renegotiate or change programmes, had resulted in a portfolio that met learner needs.
- In more than a few programmes, integrated assessment appropriately reduced learners' work load and supported a holistic approach to learning.
- Learner-friendly pre-entry guidance and on-course guidance and support, had resulted in good retention in most programmes in the current session and had supported learner motivation and commitment.

4.2 Computing and ICT

Learning and teaching process

Strengths

- Most learners were motivated and actively engaged with learning activities and in classroom discussion.
- Most learners made good use of a range of resources to develop their practical IT skills and independent learning skills.
- Well-qualified staff used their subject knowledge effectively to engage learners and made good use of industry experts to enhance the learning experience.
- More than a few staff had designed and used contextualised learning and assessment materials to promote relevant use of IT in learners' vocational specialisms and facilitate development of IT skills to a higher level.
- Most staff used verbal feedback and formative assessment effectively to enhance learners' skills and understanding.
- Very supportive staff-learner relationships and high staff commitment to learner progress and wellbeing had created a constructive learning environment which had a positive influence on learner attainment and achievement.
- Almost all staff set appropriate standards for learner conduct, and course work to match awarding body requirements.

Weaknesses

- More than a few learners were not sufficiently consolidating and reflecting on their learning or developing their learning skills.
- In more than a few lessons, teaching staff did not use a sufficiently wide range of learning and teaching approaches or materials, including ICT, to consolidate learning or extend the level of challenge for learners.
- Almost all teaching staff did not plan systematically for the development of learners' core skills.

Learner progress and outcomes

Strengths

- Most learners increased their self-confidence and gained a positive attitude to learning.
- Almost all learners gained useful employability skills.
- More than a few learners enhanced their citizenship skills by participating in a wide range of appropriate college-based activities.
- Attainment rates were high for the core skills of *communication*, *numeracy* and *working with others* on full-time FE programmes.
- Attainment rates were high in almost all FE programmes.
- Attainment rates were high in almost all units.
- Retention rates were high in almost all part-time FE programmes.
- Almost all learners who completed the NQ Digital Media programme (SCQF level 5) had progressed to further study.

Weaknesses

- More than a few learners did not set sufficiently relevant and achievable goals and targets against which to measure progress from prior achievement, learning and experience.
- Retention rates were low on the full-time NQ Computing (SCQF level 5) and NQ Digital Media (SCQF level 5) programmes.
- Attainment rates were very low in a few units.

Other significant factors

- On one HE programme, there were insufficient software licences to allow learners to work independently outwith class timetabled hours.
- The high levels of guidance and learner support provided by teaching and support staff had led to improved retention and attainment rates.
- Evaluation of the learning and teaching process was insufficiently comprehensive to inform the setting of SMART targets relating to quality improvement.

4.3 Performing arts

Learning and teaching process

Strengths

- Most learners were highly motivated and engaged in their learning with a very positive attitude. They reflected well on their learning and developed high levels of specialist skills in the practical aspects of their programmes.
- Visiting industry specialists interviewed, auditioned and directed to simulate a workplace environment, in which all learners developed and applied knowledge and gained skills.
- All teaching staff used their specialist skills and drew on their ongoing industrial experience very well to equip learners with necessary skills for auditions and employment.
- All teaching staff created quality stage productions and projects which skilfully built learners' confidence.
- All teaching staff worked collectively to establish common standards for learners, creating a consistent professional environment which contextualised learning for employment.
- In all programmes, teaching staff successfully promoted achievement and supported learners within class and through extra-curricular activities.
- Most staff prepared well-developed lesson plans and master folders which resulted in effective and consistent lesson planning.
- All teaching staff were very approachable and responsive and provided high levels of support for all learners.
- All teaching staff used an effective range of approaches in developing learners' self-confidence in individual and group settings.

Weakness

- In a few classes, poor punctuality and engagement of more than a few learners had an adverse impact on their learning and achievement and that of their peers.

Learner progress and outcomes

Strengths

- Almost all learners enhanced their personal and social skills and increased their self-esteem and confidence rates, through strong cross-college and curricular links.
- Almost all learners achieved good citizenship and employability skills through professionally-led projects, additional field trips, working with local communities and schools.
- In all lessons, learners produced work of a high standard and in more than a few lessons the quality was above the standard of the unit.
- Attainment rates were high in all full-time HE programmes and part-time FE programmes.
- Attainment rates were high in most HE units.
- Retention rates were high in all programmes.

Weaknesses

- Attainment rates were low in all full-time FE programmes.
- Attainment rates were low in more than a few FE units.

Other significant factors

- The closure of the college theatre had led to performances being delivered in inadequate venues.
- All learners had insufficient access to resources for research and independent learning, including library resources and ICT.
- More than a few staff participated in innovative CPD in subject areas, which enabled them to improve the learner experience.
- Planning did not provide sufficiently for incorporation of a range of learner views and reflections to develop appropriate enhancement strategies in the longer term.

4.4 Science

Learning and teaching process

Strengths

- Almost all learners engaged well with their studies and were positive about their college experience. They valued and made good use of the support they received from staff.
- In almost all classes, learners successfully used a range of appropriate resources to enhance their understanding of the topics and address gaps in their learning.
- Almost all staff used both their subject and professional knowledge well to enhance the learning experience and raise awareness of career opportunities.
- Almost all staff used innovative techniques in their teaching to successfully motivate learners and promote a better understanding of difficult topics.
- More than a few staff made innovative use of ICT to enhance lessons and successfully engage learners.
- All teaching staff had established a good rapport with learners, leading to good interactions within the class, creating a productive learning environment.
- Almost all staff planned classes well and incorporated a range of learning activities that provided appropriate rates of challenge.
- Staff set clear and appropriate standards in line with the requirements of the awarding bodies, thus promoting good learner performance in assessments.

Weaknesses

- The progress of a few learners was impeded by their poor punctuality and because they were not fully engaged in the learning process.
- In a few cases, feedback from staff was not constructive enough to motivate learners to improve their performance.

Learner progress and outcomes

Strengths

- Almost all learners made good progress and achieved the goals set out in their personal learning plans.
- Almost all learners were confident about undertaking classroom activities, including practical work, and the core skills of *communication, information technology* and *working with others*.
- Almost all learners on dental programmes gained employability skills and expertise in their specialist working environment through a highly effective pre-entry programme.
- Most learners improved their employability skills through their coursework and practical activities.
- Almost all learners gained citizenship skills through their involvement in relevant activities and projects.
- Attainment rates were high in all programmes.
- Attainment rates were high in almost all units.

- Almost all successful learners progressed to employment or to HE.
- Learners were successful in additional local and national awards. This led to a sense of pride and satisfaction amongst learners.

Weakness

- Retention rates were low in a few programmes.

Other significant factors

- The equipment in a few areas was either outdated or insufficient and did not support the delivery of effective and varied learning experiences.
- Staff had implemented a range of innovative and successful systems to improve support for learners, resulting in improved retention and attainment rates.

5. Progress on *main points for action*

This section of the report summarises progress made by the college in relation to the 17 main points for action (MPfA) reported at the review in November 2005.

5.1 Educational provision: design, planning and management

MPfA 1 The college should ensure that all academic department, teaching section and support area operational plans contain outcome-focused targets with clearly designated responsibilities and timescales for achievement.

College strategic and operational planning was systematic. Senior managers met with operational managers to agree and set targets. The college operational plan and the plans of curriculum and support departments articulated operational targets against the college's strategic aims. These targets all included planned completion dates and clearly identified managers and staff with responsibility for their achievement. More than a few were also measurable. However, more than a few objectives were expressed as processes when they could have been expressed as outcomes or measurable targets. The college operational plan also included measurable targets for outcomes such as student retention and completion, and unit attainment. These targets were evaluated against college performance and sector averages. Progress towards aims, objectives and outcomes was monitored and evaluated by managers, sub-committees of the Board of Management and the Board itself, with particular emphasis on impact and outcomes for learners. Action was taken to address areas where targets were not being met.

This was satisfactory progress.

MPfA 2 The college should develop and implement a learning and teaching strategy that brings together staff development plans, peer review and ICT to enhance learning and teaching approaches.

The college had developed and implemented a learning and teaching strategy that linked learner feedback, self-evaluation, the development of learners' core and employability skills, staff development planning and a strategy for e-learning. The learning and teaching strategy included PDA and TQ(FE) training for new teaching staff. The college had recently revised and implemented the strategy to address the enhancement of learning and teaching for existing staff.

Teaching staff in one curriculum area had taken part in the observation of learning and teaching by an external consultant. This had resulted in targeted staff development and improvements in learning and teaching. The identification of low unit attainment rates and subsequent interventions by managers had also resulted in improvements.

Staff development activities, contextualised core skills delivery and the appointment of new operational managers had resulted in overall improvements to the learner experience, including learning and teaching. Recent staff development and good practice events had included approaches to teaching school pupils and had facilitated reflection on the purposes of learning and the use of assessment for learning. These events had also resulted in improvements to learning, teaching and assessment.

An e-learning group with *e-learning champions* had started to have a positive impact on the use of ICT for learning and teaching, including the use of the VLE. There were good examples of interactive white-boards and the VLE being used to enhance learning and teaching but this was not yet sufficiently developed across all areas of the college.

This was satisfactory progress.

MPfA 3 The college should ensure its policy for the protection of children and young people is developed fully and approved as a matter of urgency.

The college had prioritised procedures for child protection within its strategic plan and arrangements for the protection of children and young people were comprehensive and well embedded overall. A child protection officer had been appointed and the college had put in place a three-year rolling enhanced disclosure check programme for the Board of Management and all college staff.

Arrangements for staff development and awareness raising were effective. Staff who came into direct contact with school pupils in the college had been prioritised for training.

Recent actions to disseminate information about arrangements and procedures had been effective. Referral forms, policy and procedures were available online. A handy pocket-size checklist had been widely disseminated. It ensured that staff were clear about these arrangements and aware of their role in ensuring the safety of children and young people.

This was satisfactory progress.

MPfA 4 The college should ensure that arrangements for evaluating and planning services to promote access and inclusion involve all relevant key staff and take account of all relevant issues.

The college was committed to equalities, diversity, access and inclusion. The strategic plan had set out a clear vision of *extending the boundaries* for all members of the community. Staff had undertaken a number of effective actions to evaluate services for access and inclusion which involved key stakeholders.

The *Division of Learner Services* and the *Access and Inclusion Group*, with wide representation from teaching and support areas in the college, had been established to oversee and evaluate the access strategy and its implementation. A redesigned student services unit with a new and extended specialist team, including a Polish-speaking member of staff to support Polish learners in the college, had been relocated within the college to provide off-the-street, accessible guidance and information. The college had been proactive and innovative both in encouraging the participation of migrant workers from the EU through the provision of ESOL and in establishing productive links with the Polish community. The college had also successfully assisted socially disadvantaged and vulnerable women to progress into formal award-bearing programmes in partnership with North Lanarkshire Council, through the *Women's Placement Programme*.

The head of learner services and senior staff had established and led effective cross-team partnership working and collaboration between academic and support teams, including a new core skills team.

Planning for and anticipating the learning and wider personal and social needs of new learners to smooth their progress and remove obstacles to their learning, was not sufficiently well developed. The college had responded very well to disclosed or identified learning needs through robust and standardised systems. However, pre-entry and initial guidance was not sufficiently thorough or extensive. On-course guidance tracked the development of individuals as learners well overall, but did not focus sufficiently on their wider development and needs.

This was satisfactory progress, overall.

MPfA 5 The college should improve the range of progression options for learners from pre-access and flexible learning programmes, to allow them to build on their prior learning and experience.

The college had revised its curriculum portfolio effectively. It had rationalised and expanded its range of introductory programmes with articulation into more advanced provision within subject areas, in order to widen access to vocational qualifications. These introductory programmes had been designed to provide a number of opportunities for progression, and progression routes were clear. Programmes allowed learners to make informed and appropriate choices about the next level of study within their chosen area. The college had successfully expanded its provision to schools through a range of programmes for school pupils beyond S2. It had also had worked well with North Lanarkshire Council in its outreach provision for adult learners.

This was satisfactory progress.

5.2 Learner services, resources and staff

MPfA 6 The college should address the weaknesses in academic guidance for full-time HN learners to enable learners to benefit fully from the arrangements.

The college had reviewed its guidance procedures and had developed an effective approach to academic guidance within full-time HE programmes. The personal development planning (PDP) process which was part of the HE programmes ensured the regular availability of first-level support and information to class groups. It allowed individuals to reflect on their support needs and signalled opportunities for tailored, one-to-one guidance and support.

Staff were proactive in making themselves available to learners, responded well to learners wishing to talk over a problem which affected their learning, and made effective use of referral systems within the college and central support services. Good, clear direction for academic guidance through *tutor guides*, the commitment and skills of guidance tutors and the highly effective *Horizon Centre* ensured a comprehensive support service for the full range of needs for learners on HE programmes of study.

This was satisfactory progress.

MPfA 7 Managers should ensure that cross-college arrangements for core skills development support effectively the needs of learners.

Managers and staff clearly valued the importance of core and transferable skills and had established and implemented an effective strategy for developing the core skills of all learners. The college had developed good arrangements for the planning, delivery and quality assurance of core skills and had implemented an appropriate range of methods to establish the core skills levels of new entrants, including an on-line *core skills portal*. As a result, learners were placed at the correct core skills level, and routes for progression in core skills were clear and understood by learners and staff.

The core skills team worked effectively with teaching staff and staff in the *Horizon Centre* to structure progression opportunities for individual learners within all programmes. Staff had audited the core skills content of each programme effectively. Programme and lesson planning took good account of all five core skills and in some subject areas enterprise activity had been added to enhance learners' core skills. These developments had resulted in individual certification of attainment, where appropriate.

Additional flexible opportunities were also available for learners to progress their core skills of *communication*, *numeracy* and *information technology* online in the Flexible Learning Centre and through dedicated workshops.

Teaching staff were clear about the progress of individual learners in core skills and learners were aware of their individual areas for development.

This was satisfactory progress.

MPfA 8 Staff should review personal learning support plans on a regular basis to ensure arrangements are effective.

Arrangements for learning support and extended learning support were comprehensive, robust and highly effective. The referral process was clear and accessible to staff and learners through procedures which were also available online. Personal learning support plans were reviewed regularly and quality assured.

Productive, regular exchanges with teaching departments and core skills staff and the welcoming and relaxed environment in the *Horizon Centre* had ensured a well-used support service, which was free from stigma, within the college.

An expert and valued team provided an appropriate range of services which met learner needs well and built the self-confidence and self-esteem of learners. The team provided a first-time diagnosis of dyslexia for many adult returners and put in place specialist help and assistance for the particular needs of individuals requiring additional support. However, the skills of the team had not yet been deployed effectively enough to reduce further the barriers to progress for a wider group of learners in their classroom contexts.

This was satisfactory progress.

MPfA 9 The college should ensure that suitable facilities are available for learners to have private interviews when discussing financial or personal matters.

The college had undertaken a review of the arrangements for student services and interview space.

It had relocated its accommodation for admissions, student funding and student services to the ground floor and created spaces for private interviews through additional rooms and space within staff offices.

This was satisfactory progress.

MPfA 10 Managers should ensure that staff in all specialist teaching areas are clear about their responsibilities for risk assessment.

The college had appointed a full-time health and safety officer to take forward duties in relation to risk assessment. He had identified the specialist teaching areas for which specific risk assessment was necessary and had identified staff in all of these teaching areas who would undertake the risk assessments. Training for almost all assessors had taken place and risk assessments had been completed in those areas in which assessors had received training. Heads of division included briefings on health and safety and risk assessments in their regular meetings with programme teams. All staff were aware of the risk assessments for their specialist areas. The induction programme for new staff included information on health and safety, including risk assessment.

This was satisfactory progress.

MPfA 11 The college should adopt a more proactive approach to publicising suitable educational websites to encourage independent learning and promote access for part-time learners.

The college had implemented a number of useful arrangements to make educational websites more widely available to learners. These arrangements included the college VLE, in which a few teaching staff on a few programmes had identified suitable websites. These ranged from educational sites to those of local government and professional bodies. The core skills materials available through the *Student Intranet* linked appropriately to learning resources provided by Learning and Teaching Scotland.

In the college library, staff had identified and made available to learners, through the *Student Intranet*, appropriate websites covering a wide range of subject areas. The library also encouraged Internet use by learners by providing access to guides to Internet use, which included tutorials on accessing subject areas online, how to evaluate the content of websites and how to cite websites in documents. Learners also had access to the considerable resources of the *Intute* subject gateway.

In addition to the websites identified in the *Student Intranet* and through the library, teaching staff in more than a few areas of the college identified relevant websites in programme notes. Learners used these resources both in college and in other locations, and welcomed the flexibility and immediacy of access to them.

This was satisfactory progress.

MPfA 12 The college should rectify shortcomings in access and safety arrangements.

Hearing loops had been installed in all public reception areas and the college had publicised their presence well. The leading edges of all stairways had been highlighted to assist visually-impaired learners and staff in negotiating them. All toilets for disabled people had alarms fitted although, in one case, the alarm was not operational.

More generally, the college had recognised for a long time that the nature of its buildings did not permit access for disabled people to the full range of its facilities. No practical short-term solution was available and the college engaged with SFC in relation to a major programme to upgrade its buildings to enable access for disabled people to the full range of its facilities and services. SFC had approved the college's business case and college managers were preparing design specifications for the new facilities.

This was satisfactory progress.

MPfA 13 Managers should ensure that the staff induction arrangements, including where necessary an introduction to learning and teaching, assessment and classroom management, are implemented consistently.

The college had an appropriate induction policy and induction arrangements for new staff. Teaching staff who had been employed recently had undertaken the induction programme.

Staff who were new to teaching were supported well and given very effective guidance on approaches to learning, teaching and assessment. They were supported by a *buddy*, shadowed experienced members of teaching staff and were involved in team-teaching. More than a few who were recently employed and new to teaching were working towards the Advanced Diploma Teaching in FE: An Introduction, and others were scheduled to commence this programme within six months of being employed.

This was satisfactory progress.

MPfA 14 The college should ensure that all staff engage in comprehensive equalities training.

Most staff had undertaken training to raise their awareness of equalities issues. This included the duties required by equalities legislation. The majority of staff had also undertaken specific equalities training in race and half had completed training on disability. The majority of staff had not undertaken specific training on gender equality. However, further mandatory, specific equalities training was planned. The college had committed to training its curriculum teams in *Quality and Equality in Learning and Teaching Materials (QELTM)* to ensure that learning and teaching materials promoted positive attitudes to social and cultural diversity. However, only a few staff had undertaken this training so far. Almost all staff had a good general awareness of the need to avoid discrimination but were less clear on the duty to promote equality and how this could be achieved. Staff training in equalities was being carried out as part of a well-considered approach to developing an inclusive college culture where equalities training and other college policies and processes were integrated well. However, until recently, the pace of this development had been too slow.

This was satisfactory progress overall.

5.3 Quality assurance, improvement and enhancement

MPfA 15 The college should ensure that all staff implement fully its internal moderation procedures.

The college's revised procedures for internal moderation had been introduced in May 2005. The college provided purposeful development for moderators in June and in August of that year and had implemented these revised procedures fully and consistently. Pre-delivery duties included evaluation of instruments of assessment and scrutiny of assessment arrangements for units new to the college. Internal moderators followed college procedures systematically to sample and moderate assessed work on a three-year cycle, with an appropriate scheme of prioritisation. Where necessary, college procedures, based on the requirements of SQA external moderation, had been modified to meet the requirements of other awarding bodies. Areas for improvement, in particular liaison and communication between internal moderators in respect of units delivered and assessed in an integrated manner, had been addressed successfully. Internal moderation procedures were consistently applied across FE, HE and work-based qualifications. The college had implemented robust arrangements to ensure that assessors implemented actions required of them as a result of internal verification.

This was satisfactory progress.

MPfA 16 The college should ensure that PI data held centrally agrees with information used by programme teams in order to provide a consistent picture of student retention and attainment.

The college had implemented improvements to its data gathering, processing and reporting arrangements in relation to performance indicators. The introduction of online registers had led to more consistent collection of learner attendance data, with the result that performance indicators relating to learner retention were more robust and were consistent with information on retention used by programme teams.

The college had clarified with teaching staff and with MIS staff the criteria for a pass for full-time FE programmes without a named award. This had helped to provide consistency in reporting learner attainment on these programmes. Arrangements for the authorisation of extensions to result dates had been tightened up, with the result that attainment data was more complete.

Programme teams received unit attainment data reports timeously at the end of a semester. In most cases, these reports confirmed programme teams' own information. Discrepancies were identified and resolved through discussion between teaching staff and MIS staff. The role of the *divisional support assistants* in providing effective liaison between programme teams and MIS staff was important in this regard.

The college had recently changed its reporting arrangements for learner retention and attainment to the new SFC student outcome system. A few staff did not yet fully understand the categories of outcome or the procedures for calculating outcomes.

This was satisfactory progress.

MPfA 17 The college should ensure that all self-evaluation review reports are evaluative, identify explicit improvement targets and are used to monitor progress against action points.

The college had made considerable progress in standardising its procedures for and documentation of self-evaluation activities. These activities covered all areas of college work that had an impact on the learner experience and included team evaluation and operational plans, course boards, programme team meetings, analysis of learner questionnaires, and retention and attainment reviews. They culminated in an annual review meeting for each teaching division. For self-evaluation purposes, teaching divisions used the SFC/HMIE quality framework and support departments used indicators appropriate to their functions.

The format for self-evaluation reports provided appropriately for the identification of strengths and areas for improvement. Action plan templates encouraged the identification of explicit targets for improvement.

All self-evaluation reports identified strengths and areas for improvement. All action plans contained explicit targets. However, in all reports, there were many instances of non-evaluative statements identified as strengths or areas for development. In all action plans and development plans there were more than a few targets that were not explicit enough to identify the measure of achievement or the extent of progress made. In the self-evaluation reports of teaching divisions, more than a few statements, identified under *Learning and teaching process*, were not applicable to that element, but referred to *Programme design*, *Guidance and support*, or other elements. There was very little evaluation of actual teaching practice.

College managers and staff in the quality department had planned and implemented a number of initiatives to develop, improve and enhance the evaluative writing skills of report writers. They had worked with teaching staff with a view to improving the quality of their evaluations of learning and teaching. Staff in the quality department had also worked with report writers to improve draft self-evaluation reports before submission to the college principal for an annual review meeting. However, most teaching staff had not made sufficient progress in developing their evaluative skills in relation to learning and teaching.

This was not satisfactory progress.

5.4 Overall conclusion

The college has made satisfactory progress in 14 of the 17 *main points for action*.

The college has made satisfactory progress, overall, in two of the 17 *main points for action*.

The college has not made satisfactory progress in one of the 17 *main points for action*.

6. Example of sector-leading and innovative practice

6.1 Examples of sector-leading and innovative practice in subject areas

Learning and teaching process

Enhancing employability skills through induction to dental programmes

Prior to commencing the SVQ level 3 in Dental Nursing, learners completed a five-week induction programme. As well as providing a pre-entry taster experience, the induction programme acquainted learners with the skills for employability, the professional standards and the specific working environment associated with nursing in the dental profession.

During the induction period, teaching staff identified the learning styles of all participants. They adapted teaching approaches to meet the needs of the diverse range of learners who were attracted to the SVQ programme. Learners were able to make an informed decision as to whether working in such a specialised environment was appropriate for them and were able to highlight early any requirement for additional support. On commencement of the SVQ programme, learners were familiar with the professional code of conduct and working practices which would be expected of them when they took up work placements. As a result, they were well prepared for working in a demanding environment, where health and safety were paramount.

The induction programme was delivered in the college's dental suite, which comprised a fully functional dental surgery, teaching area and reception area. Learners participated in practical activities in the surgery, and the programme familiarised them with health and safety requirements, risk assessments and COSHH regulations. The programme also developed citizenship skills through the *tooth brushing programme* where learners supported children in the college nursery through daily visits, which encouraged positive behaviours and a tooth brushing regime in the children.

The impact of the induction programme had been recognised by NHS trust training providers in the West of Scotland, who planned to adopt this model for their dental nurse training programmes. Learners on work placements in local surgeries were recognised by them as being work-ready, with positive attitudes towards their profession.

7. What happens next?

The college should work with its designated HMI to address any *main points for action* where progress was *not satisfactory*. SFC will consider the report and write to the college indicating the scope and nature of further engagement by the college with SFC and HMIE.

8. How can you contact us?

If you would like an additional copy of this report

Copies of this report have been sent to the principal and college staff, the Chair of the Board of Management and appropriate Members of the Scottish Parliament. Subject to availability, further copies may be obtained free of charge from HM Inspectorate of Education, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Almondvale Way, Livingston EH54 6GA or by telephoning 01506 600272. Copies are also available on our website at www.hmie.gov.uk.

HMIE feedback and complaints procedure

Should you wish to comment on any aspect of further education reviews, you should write in the first instance to Dr Wray Bodys, HMCI, at the above address.

If you have a concern about this report, you should write in the first instance to our Complaints Manager, HMIE Business Management and Communications Team, Second Floor, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Almondvale Way, Livingston, EH54 6GA. You can also email HMIEcomplaints@hmie.gsi.gov.uk. A copy of our complaints procedure is available from this office, by telephoning 01506 600200 or from our website at www.hmie.gov.uk.

If you are not satisfied with the action we have taken at the end of our complaints procedure, you can raise your complaint with the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO). The SPSO is fully independent and has powers to investigate complaints about Government departments and agencies. You should write to SPSO, Freepost EH641, Edinburgh EH3 0BR. You can also telephone 0800 377 7330 fax 0800 377 7331 or e-mail ask@spsa.org.uk. More information about the Ombudsman's office can be obtained from the website: www.spsa.org.uk.

Juliet Fraser
HM Inspector

Crown Copyright 2008
HM Inspectorate of Education

Appendix 1

Glossary of terms

ESOL	English for speakers of other languages
FE	Further Education
HE	Higher Education
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HMCI	Her Majesty's Chief Inspector
HMIE	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education
HN	Higher National
HNC	Higher National Certificate
HND	Higher National Diploma
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IT	Information Technology
NC	National Certificate
NQ	National Qualification
PI	Performance Indicator
QELTM	Quality and Equality in Learning and Teaching Materials
SCQF	Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework
SFC	Scottish Further and Higher Education Funding Council
SARU	Student achievement ratio by unit of learning
SQA	Scottish Qualifications Authority
SVQ	Scottish Vocational Qualification
TQ(FE)	Teaching Qualification Further Education
VLE	Virtual Learning Environment
VQ	Vocational Qualification

Appendix 2

The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework

SCQF levels	SQA National Units, courses and group awards	Higher Education (HE) qualifications	SVQs	SCQF levels
12		Doctorate		12
11		Masters	SVQ 5	11
10		Honours degree		10
9		Ordinary degree		9
8		HND	SVQ 4	8
7	Advanced Higher	Diploma of HE		7
		HNC		
		Certificate of HE		
6	Higher		SVQ 3	6
5	Intermediate 2/ Credit S Grade		SVQ 2	5
4	Intermediate 1/ General S Grade		SVQ 1	4
3	Access 3/ Foundation S Grade			3
2	Access 2			2
1	Access 1			1

The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework brings together all Scottish mainstream qualifications into a single unified framework. The framework includes degree provision, HNC and HND, SQA National Qualifications, and SVQs. There are 12 levels ranging from Access 1 at SCQF level 1 to Doctorate at SCQF level 12. Each qualification whether a unit, group of units or larger group award has also been allocated a number of SCQF credits. Each credit represents 10 notional hours of required learning. Doctorates based on a thesis are an exception to this.

Other learning may be credit rated and included in the framework provided it leads to a clear set of learning outcomes and has quality-assured learner assessment. In 2006, all of Scotland's colleges acquired powers to credit rate provision that meets these criteria.

The positioning of SVQs in the table gives an indication of their place in the framework. Work is ongoing to allocate SCQF credits to them.