

Cabinet – 14 April 2010

Walsall Adult and Community College Ofsted report

Portfolio:	Councillor Harris – Leisure and Culture
Service:	Walsall Adult and Community College
Wards:	All
Key decision:	No
Forward plan:	No

1. Summary of report

Walsall Adult and Community College was inspected by Ofsted in January 2010 and the report was published on the Ofsted web-site on 12 March 2010.

The college was graded as good overall and with good capacity to continue to improve.

Walsall Council is the first council nationally to undergo Ofsted under a brand new Ofsted assessment framework. Therefore national benchmarking data is not yet established. However, benchmarking against previous inspections of the predecessor colleges, the results show a very significant improvement in Ofsted grades awarded. Walsall Adult and Community College did especially well under the Ofsted Safeguarding Assessment and the college was described by Ofsted as 'having raised the bar' in this important aspect of its work. Colleges with overall effectiveness grade 2 are generally identified as being in top twenty percent in provider performance nationally.

A number of areas for development were identified by Ofsted; these will be addressed through the college quality improvement and post inspection action plan.

The full report is available in each of the political group rooms.

2. Recommendations

That officers report back to the next Cabinet meeting on a proposed action plan to address the areas for development identified in the Ofsted report.

3. Background information

3.1 Eight Ofsted Inspectors spent a week at Walsall Adult & Community College between 18 January and 22 January 2010 completing a full inspection of the new college under the new common inspection framework. The inspection covered all aspects of the college's provision including:

- non-accredited courses (Community Learning/Informal Adult Learning)
- qualification based courses
- family learning
- NVQ courses designed to meet the needs of companies and employers (Train to Gain)

There was a particular focus on Community Learning; ESOL; Provision for People with Learning Difficulty/Disability and NVQs

The outcomes of all these areas were considered by the lead HMI in order to make overall judgements and award grades about the college's overall effectiveness in adult learning and training in Walsall and its capacity to continuously improve.

The grade system is:

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

3.2 The inspection also evaluated the college standards in a number of cross-cutting themes including overall standards of learners' achievement and success, standards of teaching and classroom practice, standards of leadership and management of the college, standards in safeguarding learners, equality and diversity. In addition, college students and employers with whom the college works completed a survey through which they gave their views on the college.

3.3 The overall grade awarded to the college for Overall Effectiveness was Grade 2 Good.

The grade awarded for the college's Capacity to Improve was Grade 2 Good.

3.4 The main findings published in the Ofsted report are as follows:

- The overall effectiveness of the college provision is good.
- Partnership working is good. However provision is not yet sufficiently linked to the wider regeneration agenda in Walsall.
- Outcomes (achievement and success) for learners are good.
- Much teaching and learning is good. However there is still too much satisfactory teaching and under-use of new learning technologies.
- Strategic direction is good. The strategic plan sets out detailed, ambitious and challenging targets to be met by 2013.
- The board representation is good. There is good representation from elected members, community and local business.
- Management of change is good.

- Safeguarding arrangements are good.
- ESOL provision is good.
- Provision for people with learning difficult/disability is good.
- Community learning (non-accredited) is satisfactory.
- NVQ in Education and Training is satisfactory.
- Equality and Diversity is satisfactory overall.

3.5 Learners' and Employers' Views about the College.

Learners like:

- The support, help and encouragement they receive from tutors.
- The wide choice and flexibility in provision.
- The opportunities they have to make social contact, to gain employability skills, to gain numeracy skills and to gain qualifications.

Learners would like to see improvement in:

- Equipment, resources and access to computers, particularly in community venues.
- Course organisation and paperwork.

Employers like:

- The good relations with assessors and the support assessors give to raise their employees' confidence.
- The way in which the training brings benefits to the company/workplace.

Employers would like improvements in:

- The schedules for providing feedback to the employer on their employees' progress.

4. Resource considerations

- 4.1 **Financial:** The current 09/10 net budget is £0.34m, which is made up of £3.93m expenditure and £3.59m income.

The net expected outturn for 09/10 is £0.36m. An overspend of £0.015m is expected due to increased staffing costs within the NVQ assessment centre, which is council funded. However WACC is attempting to make efficiency savings within other areas to support this overspend.

- 4.2 **Legal:** None

- 4.3 **Staffing:** The college reorganisation, referred to and endorsed in the Ofsted report, is currently open to staff consultation.

5. Citizen impact

The positive outcome from the Ofsted inspection will provide Walsall citizens with greater confidence in the council's adult learning services and its ability to support them to develop their skills for life, for independence, for work and for active citizenship.

6. Community safety

None

7. Environmental impact

None

8. Performance and risk management issues

8.1 **Risk:** There is no/very low risk of another full Ofsted inspection of Walsall Adult and Community College within the next 4/5 years.

8.2 **Performance management:** The college quality improvement and post inspection action plan will be underpinned and supported by agreed performance management methods.

9. Equality implications

Whilst the college approach to equality and diversity was judged 'satisfactory overall' the college will be implementing an action plan to improve the promotion of equality and diversity in teaching and learning practices.

10. Consultation

Consultation with College staff, sub-contractors, learners and employers will be completed within the process of drawing up and implementing the post inspection action plan.

Background papers

Ofsted Published Report

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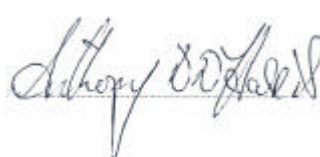
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