



A report by HM Inspectors on behalf of the
Scottish Funding Council



**Banff and Buchan College
of Further Education**
3 July 2009

The external review process

HM Inspectors undertake an independent review of the quality of provision in Scotland's colleges on behalf of the Scottish Further and Higher Education 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.

During external reviews, members of the review teams observe learning and teaching and hold discussions with learners and staff. They examine information on learner attainment and evaluate learner progress and outcomes. They meet with members of the Board of Management and obtain feedback from community groups, partners and employers that work with the college.

The primary purpose of this report is to convey fully the main outcomes arising from the external review, to acknowledge the college's strengths and to provide a clear agenda for future action to improve and enhance quality.

This report contains confidence statements that express the review team's overall evaluation of *high quality learning*, *learner engagement* and *quality culture*.

The report also uses the following terms 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%

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1 Introduction

The college and its context

In carrying out the external review of Banff and Buchan College of Further Education, HMIE took the following college context fully into account.

The college was founded in 1966 to serve the north-east of Scotland and now also provides extensive training and education for the nautical and marine engineering industries throughout the UK. It moved to the current main campus in Fraserburgh in 1973 and recently submitted a full business case to the Scottish Further and Higher Education Funding Council (SFC) to develop and improve the existing teaching accommodation.

The college operates significant outreach provision across the largely rural area of north Aberdeenshire. This includes learning centres in locations at Aberdeen, Peterhead, Huntly, Ellon, Turriff, Keith and Macduff. The college assists learners in rural areas to travel to their classes.

Compared with the rest of the UK, the employment rate in Aberdeenshire has remained low with highly skilled workers gaining employment in the energy and engineering industries. As a result, the college curriculum is characterised by high levels of engineering provision and the college enjoys strong links with industry partners.

The college works closely with local authorities, employers, community organisations and Scottish Enterprise Grampian, to ensure that programmes respond to current labour market and skills audit analyses. In particular, it works with local authorities to extend the range of options for primary and secondary pupils. There is a wide range of school-college partnership activity.

The college liaises with community organisations to ensure that persons at risk from social exclusion are catered for and has comprehensive articulation arrangements that support learners moving to higher education institutes.

The college now enrolls around 21,000 learners in a year and employs around 350 staff.

The college revenue budget is £11.7 million of which some 77% is accounted for by grant-in-aid from the SFC.

The external review

The external review by HMIE took place during the week beginning 23 March 2009.

We examined learning and teaching and other important activities that impact on the quality of the learner experience. We evaluated these against the three key principles of *high quality learning, learner engagement and quality culture*, using the 17 reference quality indicators outlined in *External quality arrangements for Scotland's colleges, September 2008*. We used information from previous visits to the college to decide the scope of the review and added the quality indicators 4.1 and 4.2 which relate to how well the college serves employers and its communities, and 6.1 which relates to the effectiveness of college planning processes.

The external review team talked with learners, staff at all levels in the college, members of the Board of Management, employers, external agencies and other users of the college.

We found examples of excellence or sector-leading practice which we describe in this report.

2. Confidence statements

The following are holistic judgements made by HMIE on the basis of the external review activities which took place in March 2009. These judgements relate to the key principles of high quality learning, learner engagement and quality culture.

HMIE is confident that:

- **learners are progressing well and achieving relevant, high quality outcomes, overall. However, attainment rates for further education (FE) learners remain low;**
- **the college has in place high quality learning and teaching processes;**
- **learners are actively engaged in enhancing their own learning and the work and life of the college; and**
- **the college is led well and is enhancing the quality of its services for learners and other stakeholders. However, the college does not have effective strategies to improve attainment rates for FE learners.**

3. Summary

Strengths:

- The college has made good progress against the performance measures within its strategic plan.
- Early retention rates for learners on both FE and Higher Education (HE) programmes are good and learner attainment on HE programmes is good overall.
- The college has robust procedures for safeguarding young people and vulnerable adults.
- Productive collaboration between the college and its stakeholders in the design and delivery of programmes ensures that the needs of learners are met well.
- Strong and effective partnerships with local primary and secondary schools focus on *Curriculum for Excellence* principles.
- The college offers a broad portfolio of programmes which meet the needs of a wide range of learners well.
- Learners are well motivated, participate actively in a wide range of learning activities and enjoy very positive relationships with staff.
- Learners engage well with staff to enhance their learning and the college shows firm commitment to improving learner engagement.
- The college has well-embedded strategic and operational planning processes and takes good account of national and local priorities.
- The principal communicates effectively with staff and provides strong leadership for the vision and direction of the college's curriculum.

Main points for action:

- Curricular teams should further develop and implement approaches to improve attainment rates for FE learners.
- The college should ensure the promotion of positive attitudes to cultural and social diversity within the curriculum.
- Senior managers should provide strategic direction to curricular teams to address low attainment rates for FE learners.

4. How well are learners progressing and achieving relevant, high quality outcomes?

HMIE is confident that learners are progressing well and achieving relevant, high quality outcomes, overall. However, attainment rates for FE learners remain low.

How well does the college perform against its educational aims, objectives and targets?

The college is making good progress against the performance measures for each of the strategies within the strategic plan, *Putting people first: strategic plan 2008 -2011*. Important targets have been achieved on developing and delivering to the SFC the full business case for a major estates refurbishment to improve facilities for learners at the Fraserburgh campus.

Significant and extensive partnership working with local schools, and partnership working with student participation in quality scotland (sparqs), have helped the college move towards its aim of achieving excellence in learning and teaching. The college has secured significant contracts with a number of leading global companies in subsea engineering and offshore support, in line with its aim of achieving *excellence in knowledge transfer and commercial development*.

How effective is the college at achieving and maintaining high levels of retention, attainment and progression?

Early retention rates for learners on both FE and HE programmes are high and have been so over the previous three years. Numerous employment opportunities attract some learners into employment before completion of their programmes and overall retention rates for learners on full-time FE and HE programmes are low. The college has introduced effective additional support measures to help particular groups such as European and other HE learners to remain on programmes.

Attainment rates on HE programmes are good overall, and most learners who complete their programmes progress to further study or employment. However, there are a few HE programme areas with low attainment rates. Attainment rates on FE programmes are low and have been so over the last two years. There is no college-wide strategy for improving attainment rates. Issues of low attainment are currently addressed through programme management procedures but they have not yet had a significant impact.

How well does the college fulfil its statutory duties?

The college has robust procedures for safeguarding young people and vulnerable adults. Staff understand their roles and responsibilities well and staff working with vulnerable adults and with partner organisations have undertaken appropriate training, which they apply to positive effect.

The college has monitored and reported on all three public sector duties for gender, race and disability. Staff with responsibility for equality and diversity duties work well with administrative staff to improve the data available for analysis. Managers responsible for both staffing and learner aspects of equality work well together to improve college arrangements.

The college assesses the impact of all key policies, procedures and arrangements. It has published a triennial schedule for policy review and assessment and staff have identified ways to improve their impact assessment procedures. The college's *Diversity Management Group* regularly monitors developments.

How accessible, flexible and inclusive are the college's programmes and services?

The college identifies the needs of learners effectively and responds flexibly to assist learners. Learners use a wide range of support strategies and technologies and the college offers an extensive portfolio of outreach provision. The principal and staff work enthusiastically in productive partnerships with external agencies to develop programmes that meet the needs of learners and other stakeholders. Social work and community care partners value the work of the college very highly.

The college has strong and effective partnerships with local primary and secondary schools in which programmes are designed around *Curriculum for Excellence* principles. Through these partnerships, and the college's *Steps* strategy, large numbers of pupils of all ages participate in a wide range of learning experiences which help inform subject choice and develop essential skills.

Productive relationships between the college and key partners within the oil, gas and maritime industries have resulted in programmes that prepare learners well for industry requirements.

How well do programmes and services meet learner needs?

The college is very flexible and responsive to client needs, offers a broad portfolio of programmes and matches learners well to college courses. In the majority of programmes, learners are able to enter at levels which allow them to cope with the demands of study and to progress to further study or employment. Essential skills such as employability skills are embedded within course work and this helps learners build their confidence as they enter employment. Learners are very positive about the support they receive and how it helps improve their independent learning skills on higher level programmes.

The college is a key provider of learning in rural communities. It offers a range of programmes which provide community-based learners with access to both informal and certificated provision in response to local need. Learners on these programmes contribute effectively to the design of their programmes, which ensures their requirements are fully met.

Most learners have a good awareness of the design and planning of their programmes and use this knowledge effectively when discussing and planning their future career and educational development with staff.

How well do learners make progress, attain qualifications and achieve more widely?

Most learners are making good progress and gaining useful skills that allow them to enter employment or further study.

The majority of learners who complete their programmes gain certificated awards. More than a few learners gain additional industrial sector awards which further enhance their employability. Learners benefit from the emphasis on employability and citizenship skills and the core skills of communication and teamwork in their programmes. Many also gain sector-specific vocational skills.

In more than a few subject areas, teaching staff encourage learners to enter external skills competitions. Learners have had considerable success, winning awards in local and national events. Their success is celebrated widely in college publications and the local press. Full-time learners use tutorial classes effectively to discuss preparation and progression to employment or future learning with tutors. Programme tutors monitor learners' progress in employability skills using an *employability checklist* in their Personal Learning Plans (PLPs). This works very effectively.

How well does the college serve local and national employers?

Productive collaboration between the college and its stakeholders in the design, delivery and evaluation of programmes ensure that the needs of learners are met well. The college has worked effectively with partners to secure joint funding to develop a range of programmes. Employers are highly satisfied with college programmes which, in many cases, have been redesigned to meet their requirements. Schools access a wide range of programmes delivered by college staff and are very satisfied with the programmes.

How well does the college serve its communities?

Regular and effective communication between the college and its stakeholders strengthens the strong partnerships with community and industry partners. Communication between community organisations and the college key contact personnel works very well. This leads to learners receiving good support to progress in their learning and build their confidence to take further study options. The college responds flexibly to learners with additional support needs, providing access to a range of provision in mainstream programmes or outreach options.

5. How effective are the college's learning and teaching processes?

HMIE is confident that the college has in place high quality learning and teaching processes.

How well does the college develop and deliver programmes and services to meet the needs of learners from all backgrounds?

The college offers a broad portfolio of programmes which meets the needs of a diverse range of learners well. It has responded effectively to meet the needs of learners from employers and the local community. However, the college does not comprehensively review curriculum materials to promote positive attitudes to cultural and social diversity and ensure the avoidance of cultural bias.

There is an extensive range of outreach provision which offers access to a variety of learning opportunities designed to meet the needs of learners. In much of this provision, key points of contact work well together, contribute added value to community care evaluation and learner self-assessment, and provide comprehensive client profile information. These programmes are very important in building the self-confidence of learners who would not have been able to undertake college programmes otherwise. In almost all college programmes, there are progression opportunities to further study and employment.

How well do learners learn?

Learners are well motivated and take part actively in a wide range of learning activities that develop a range of skills. Most learners make good use of resources to improve their skills and extend their knowledge and understanding. Learners from schools are able to further their understanding and knowledge in a range of subject areas by engaging in college programmes, including those based in purpose-built facilities.

Learners relate the activities and experiences in their programmes to the experiences they have gained in the workplace. They are enthusiastic and work very well in teams and with peers to clarify and develop their learning in an appropriate range of classroom and practical activities.

Almost all learners are making good progress in their programmes and use constructive feedback from staff to develop appropriate skills, including employability skills.

How well do teaching and the use of resources ensure effective learning?

Most teaching staff use a good range of resources and an appropriate range of teaching approaches effectively to ensure learners are motivated, sufficiently challenged and engaged in their learning. However, the majority of teaching staff do not use a sufficient range of information and communications technology (ICT) as part of the teaching process to stimulate learner engagement or extend their understanding. In a few cases, teaching staff do not explain the requirements of teamwork tasks clearly enough, which results in a few learners becoming disengaged from the activities.

Staff are enthusiastic about their subject areas and apply their knowledge and vocational experience effectively to contextualise learning. This approach enhances the learning experience and learners value it highly.

How effective is the context and planning for learning and teaching?

In almost all cases, there are very positive relationships between staff and learners. These relationships create a purposeful environment for learning which helps learners to gain self-confidence and develop as independent learners. This is particularly important for school-based learners, who enjoy the more relaxed environment within college programmes.

Staff ensure learners have good opportunities to discuss their learning. However, in a few instances staff do not check learners' understanding well enough. Learners are encouraged by staff to put forward views and suggestions on learning and assessment and see that this leads to action and improvement. Staff respond well to learner feedback by introducing teaching approaches which are more appropriate and, in many cases, more personalised.

Staff plan learning and teaching activities well to meet the needs of learners. The college is proactive in helping learners to find work placements and there are many examples where effective and flexible programme planning enables learners to attend work placement in order to enhance their learning in college.

How well is assessment used to promote effective learning?

Learners are prepared well for assessment and the scheduling of assessments is appropriately paced for most learners. However, a few learners are given insufficient information about the timing or nature of assessments and this causes them some anxiety.

Learners value the additional support staff provide to enable them to undertake assessment. There are good examples where staff have adapted the design of assessments to meet the needs of individual learners. Staff also provide effective feedback to learners to support the development of appropriate skills and help them reflect on their learning and plan for improvements.

How well are potential and current learners provided with information, advice and support?

The majority of learners on full-time programmes receive appropriate and helpful pre-entry guidance to identify their goals both at their initial enquiry and at the interview stage. As part of the *Student personal development and support programme*, learners make good use of the weekly tutorial classes, with effective support from course tutors, to complete their PLP. The plans ensure that learners reflect on their learning, consider their progress and plan for wider achievements, including employability skills. In almost all cases, learners value the quality of support they receive from staff.

Support staff and teaching staff work effectively together to offer additional support to learners. They give learners helpful guidance on potential career opportunities and progression to universities. The college has developed effective tailored guidance materials for school pupils and their parents and carers to inform curricular choices.

How well does the college sustain continuous enhancement through self-evaluation and internal review activities?

Teaching staff teams routinely review college programmes and work hard to gain the views of learners, employers and other partners to improve the learner experience. In more than a few cases, employers and community partners are involved in curriculum planning and review. Learners have a variety of opportunities to contribute effectively to the quality enhancement process. Almost all lecturers use a variety of methods to engage learners in evaluating their overall experiences in the college, which learners find helpful. These methods include one-to-one interviews between staff and learners and *student liaison panel meetings*. Staff regularly monitor progress with actions for improvement and make further changes where necessary.

6. How well are learners engaged in enhancing their own learning and the work and life of the college?

HMIE is confident that learners are actively engaged in enhancing their own learning and the work and life of the college.

How well do learners engage in enhancing their own learning?

Relationships between learners and staff are very positive across the college. In most cases, staff discuss with learners ways in which they can reflect upon their learning experiences, review areas of weakness and identify areas for improvement. As part of the *Student personal development and support programme*, almost all full-time learners participate in regular tutorial sessions where they engage in discussions with staff to evaluate learning, teaching and assessment. In these sessions, learners complete PLPs and set individual learning targets. They discuss with staff how they are progressing and how the learning experience and the style of teaching suits their needs. Where learners express concerns about aspects of their learning, most staff respond quickly to deal with the issues or make changes. Often practical solutions suggested by learners are implemented.

In a few subject areas, learners engage in daily debriefing sessions to evaluate their learning experiences with staff. These sessions provide an ongoing learning and development process for learners which is leading to improvements and developing mutual trust and openness.

There are examples of good practice in the subject areas of sport, and art and design, where learners are regularly involved in joint planning of learning, and develop a greater sense of ownership of their learning. Learners are encouraged to engage in peer support, which leads to them further developing a range of essential skills.

Learners on part-time programmes actively engage with their employers and teaching staff to evaluate learning and teaching and enhance their own learning. Community learners review their progress through an online survey. These learners benefit through staff using the findings of the survey to improve and enhance support, or to focus tutorial provision.

How well do learners engage in enhancing the work and life of the college?

The college shows firm commitment to improve learner engagement within its plan *Excellence in Learning and Teaching*. It has developed a variety of ways to increase opportunities for learners to be heard and to encourage them to engage in enhancing their learning, and has provided appropriate resources and training to enable this to happen. In almost all cases, learners' views and issues are represented well in course team meetings or *student liaison panel* meetings. The Students' Association and college staff value the new arrangements and see measurable and positive improvement.

Most full-time learners are engaged in the life and work of the college through their active involvement in *student liaison panel* meetings and the class representative system. Learner representatives play an active role in key decision-making

committees in the college. Learners feel this has a real impact, and provides opportunities for them to influence decisions about learning and the curriculum, to negotiate solutions to ICT issues or discuss requests for facilities. As a result, learners feel their views are heard and valued, and see appropriate and timely responses which improve their experiences.

The college staff demonstrate to learners that they take learner issues seriously through the *you said we did* initiative. In this initiative, the college communicates well its response to concerns raised by the Students' Association and learners.

The college has reconstituted the Students' Association, and provided a Student Services Officer whose remit is to develop and coordinate a more effective model of learner engagement and support learners across the college. The Students' Association has developed and implemented a pilot online learner satisfaction survey. This pilot successfully engaged a representative range of learners, and produced information on a range of issues and useful suggestions for improvement. The cross-college *quality committee* and newly formed *learning and teaching committee* plan to take these suggestions forward. The Students' Association will own and promote this survey and feed the results annually into the college's self-evaluation.

7. How well is the college led, and how well is it enhancing the quality of its services for learners and other stakeholders?

HMIE is confident that the college is led well and is enhancing the quality of its services for learners and other stakeholders. However, the college does not have effective strategies to improve attainment rates for FE learners.

How effective are college planning processes?

The college operates a well-embedded strategic planning process, through which the Board of Management, learner representatives and senior managers identify key strategic aims and supporting objectives. During the previous academic session, the college piloted a new online operational planning tool, to assist teaching and support managers and curriculum leaders in reporting on progress. The online approach has now been adopted for all operational planning activities. In almost all sectors, managers use the tool well to provide regular updates on their assigned actions. Following the direction provided by the Board of Management at the annual strategic planning event, senior and operational managers set appropriate team actions to support strategic aims and objectives. Team members contribute to the development of actions and therefore understand clearly how they contribute to the achievement of broader strategic aims. This enables teams to take ownership of targets and set appropriate completion dates.

While the college's plans to address low retention have begun to have a positive impact, the strategic development plan contains no aims or objectives relating to improving attainment in FE programmes, an area of weakness within the college. Senior managers have provided insufficient strategic leadership and guidance to support curriculum teams in addressing patterns of low learner attainment.

Senior managers make very effective use of a financial and resource planning tool to plan the curriculum. They update the plan regularly, and provide the principal with reports during scheduled meetings. The tool aids decision making and identifies further continuing professional development (CPD) requirements, which are incorporated in the *college learning plan*. The college intends to link the tool to self-evaluation processes later this year.

To support the college's mission, the 2008-2011 strategic plan, *Putting people first*, expresses three appropriate strategic aims. Relevant, related strategies and performance measures support these aims. The Board of Management, principal, learner representatives and senior managers engage in an annual strategic planning event, during which they review progress against previous aims and objectives. They set appropriate overarching strategic aims for the new plan, and supporting performance measures to assist operational planning. They take good account of local and national priorities, anticipating and responding to the college's complex local socio-economic environment, shaping the curriculum accordingly.

Strategic aims are clearly linked to operational plans and targets through the new online operational planning tool. Senior managers monitor progress against operational and team actions through monthly meetings with key staff. However, in a minority of cases, these reviews are not sufficiently systematic.

The principal provides strong leadership for the vision and direction of the curriculum and communicates well with managers and staff. Staff appreciate the principal's regular presence in all areas of the college, and the weekly *Principal's Briefing* e-mail, through which he communicates college news and other significant issues. He uses his twice-yearly formal meetings with teaching and support teams and managers to provide detail of local and national priorities, to explain factors influencing strategic and operational decisions, and to note progress against operational targets. These events aid staff understanding of the direction of the college and the reasons behind decision making. Staff feel well informed and are highly committed to the college's mission and aims. They value highly the principal's accessibility and approachability, and his willingness to share information.

Senior managers work well with human resources staff to identify the CPD required. All staff participate in the *staff review and development process*, which relates to operational objectives and team actions, and contributes to the comprehensive *college learning plan*. Senior managers make good use of the views of employers, partner organisations, staff and learners to shape the content and delivery of programmes.

Teaching staff use a range of effective methods to evaluate learning and teaching at team and individual levels. These methods include *annual course reviews*, feedback from the *student liaison panels*, learner questionnaires, unit evaluations, and observation of learning and teaching. However, there is no overall strategic evaluation of learning and teaching to inform strategy or improvement. The college's *learning and teaching strategy* does not reflect current sector-wide good practice, nor aspire to excellence. Annual course review and other evaluative activities are not wholly driven by or linked to the aims of the strategy. The college is aware of this and recognises that improvements are required in this area.

Senior managers with responsibility for services to support learners lead their teams well and give clear direction. Staff provide highly effective guidance and support services for learners, including those with additional support needs. Staff are very committed to their roles, and learners and teaching staff value their support highly. Team working is particularly strong.

The college attracts learners from a diverse range of social and economic backgrounds and support teams have worked well to put in place additional arrangements for learners whose backgrounds present barriers to learning. A wide range of support strategies and technologies is used, and the college calls on specialist external services as required.

Staff across all support and teaching teams are committed to the college's culture of quality improvement and enhancement. They participate well in the appropriate range of evaluative activities, working consistently to fulfil actions arising from these activities and taking good account of learner feedback.

The college's arrangements for quality improvement and enhancement are effective overall. Senior managers are revising structures for quality enhancement in order to increase the focus on learning and teaching. As a result, they have established the *learning and teaching committee*, which includes Board of Management members. Although in its early stages, the committee has already established effective links with the Board of Management to help the Board to fulfil its obligations with regard to quality enhancement.

Teaching and support teams contribute effectively to the college's self-evaluation processes and make improvements to enhance learners' experiences. However, in most cases, teaching staff do not provide evaluative comment in *annual course review reports*. Staff understand the links between strategic, operational and team plans, and the way in which self-evaluation and resultant action planning relates to these plans. Where the college provides vocationally specific programmes for local employers and sponsors, key staff meet with external representatives to review and evaluate programmes. External partners speak highly of the college's provision and of the very effective opportunities to contribute to evaluation.

Learners provide feedback and comment to staff mainly through *student liaison panels* comprised largely of class representatives. Where staff are not able to address issues immediately, they refer them to the next *course review meeting*. Learners are confident about raising issues with staff and feel that, in almost all cases, their issues are heard and addressed timeously and effectively. The appointment of the *student services officer* has further enabled and enhanced learners' contributions to quality matters.

8. Signposting sector-leading practice or excellence

During the HMIE external review, the college submitted examples of what it considered to be sector-leading or excellent practice and the review team also identified examples worthy of dissemination. These examples of practice are described below with links to more detailed information on the HMIE website.

8.1 Sector-leading and innovative practice in school, college and employer collaboration: Skills for Work- A collaborative model

For several years the industrial partners of the college have expressed concern over the number of suitably qualified females recruited into the engineering sector. The number of females enrolling on college engineering courses was very low, compounding the issue. In response to the concerns expressed by industrial partners, the college formed a tripartite partnership with a global oilfield and information services company, to provide a positive training experience for an all-girls group in engineering. The group currently has 12 female enrolments from a partner school.

The company committed to working with the pupils over the two years of the programme. It provided two female role model mentors and access to all aspects of its operations. It offered sponsorship to allow further industrial visits to other companies and sites. This has included visits to a traditional coal/gas fired power station, a wind farm, the hub of oil and gas operations of a major oil company based in Aberdeen, and a number of visits to the company's own premises, including their headquarters in Paris. A series of visits to the school by company staff has cemented relationships with the staff and learners. The pupils assert that they would not have chosen the engineering course if there had been competition from males or the course had been offered entirely outside the school. In most cases, pupils are now seriously considering engineering or related careers as they progress in their education.

This approach between college, school and industrial partner working closely together has been successful in engaging girls and influencing their attributes. The skills the pupils develop are transferable to a wide number of educational areas.

8.2 Sector-leading and innovative practice in developing advanced employability skills – the use of Hospitality Assured

The hospitality team operates a highly realistic working environment. The team adopts the Hospitality Assured (HA) Standard for Service and Business Excellence. Hospitality Assured is endorsed by European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) and provides a means of ensuring a consistent quality of service delivery. The team recognised that HA provides an industrial benchmark which could be used to enhance the learning experience by making a direct link between qualifications offered by the college and the world of work. The HA is established in all courses at all levels within the hospitality section. It involves daily standard debriefing sessions, chaired by staff, assisting and encouraging learners on their approach to customer service and customer feedback and what they need to improve.

The introduction of HA has benefited the learning experience in the following ways.

- Learner and staff responsibilities are clearly understood. Learners fully understand their role in the production and service of food.
- Quality enhancement issues are embedded in all aspects of programme delivery.
- Learners are encouraged to build relationships with other stakeholders such as restaurant customers.

The courses offered by the hospitality section are aimed at preparing learners for employment and have been very successful in helping learners move into employment. As a result, most learners leave college to enter employment with advanced service skills which meet the needs of the industry and are notably beyond the levels required in their programmes.

8.3 Excellent practice in transition arrangements for school pupils

The college has introduced programmes for school pupils to raise their awareness of the local labour market, of college provision and of the skills required for employability. It works with a large number of primary and secondary schools to introduce pupils to further education and the labour market, after establishing the specific requirements of the schools. For example, in 2007-2008 the college enrolled 5326 primary pupils in sports coaching programmes and 1044 pupils in 'making food fun' programmes. In business and computing, the college enrolled 1818 primary and secondary pupils on first-aid programmes.

The college offers a very wide range of short practical learning experiences. These are built into school projects or comprise specific, free-standing courses. The college works extensively in partnership with secondary schools to offer a range of vocational and employability programmes, appropriate to age and stage. Wherever practicable, the programmes are aligned with the Scottish Government priorities and take good account of the *Curriculum for Excellence* agenda. This approach is very helpful to pupils in S2 in making subject choices. The college builds on this by delivering vocational pathways programmes, *Skills for Work* programmes, college experience and vocational taster courses for over 700 S3 and S4 pupils. The college offers S5 and S6 pupils further vocational options, based on HN provision, to support their school studies, with 175 S5 and S6 pupils in attendance currently.

9. What happens next?

HMIE will continue to monitor progress during annual engagement visits to the college.

Peter B Connelly
HM Inspector

10. How can you contact us?

If you would like a printed copy of this report

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Appendix 1

Glossary of terms

CPD	Continuing Professional Development
FE	Further Education
HA	Hospitality Assured
HE	Higher Education
HMIE	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education
HNC	Higher National Certificate
HND	Higher National Diploma
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
PLP	Personal Learning Plan
SCQF	Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework
SFC	Scottish Funding Council
sparqs	Student Participation in Quality Scotland
SQA	Scottish Qualifications Authority
SVQ	Scottish Vocational Qualification

Appendix 2

The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework

SCQF Levels	SQA Qualifications		Qualifications of Higher Education Institutions	Scottish Vocational Qualifications
12			DOCTORAL DEGREE	
11			INTEGRATED HIGHERS DEGREE / MASTERS DEGREE POST GRADUATE DIPLOMA POST GRADUATE CERTIFICATE	SVQ5
10			HONOURS DEGREE GRADUATE DIPLOMA GRADUATE CERTIFICATE	
9			BACHELORS / ORDINARY DEGREE GRADUATE DIPLOMA GRADUATE CERTIFICATE	SVQ4
8		HIGHER NATIONAL DIPLOMA	DIPLOMA OF HIGHER EDUCATION	
7	ADVANCED HIGHER	HIGHER NATIONAL CERTIFICATE	CERTIFICATE OF HIGHER EDUCATION	SVQ3
6	HIGHER			
5	INTERMEDIATE 2 CREDIT STANDARD GRADE			SVQ2
4	INTERMEDIATE 1 GENERAL STANDARD GRADE	NATIONAL CERTIFICATE	NATIONAL PROGRESSION AWARD	SVQ1
3	ACCESS 3 FOUNDATION STANDARD GRADE			
2	ACCESS 2			
1	ACCESS 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 Doctoral degree 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. Doctoral degrees 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. All of Scotland's colleges were awarded SCQF Credit Rating powers in January 2007.