



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



South Lanarkshire College
28 January 2011

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 HM 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 South Lanarkshire College, HMIE took the following college context fully into account.

South Lanarkshire College, East Kilbride opened in 1948 as The School of Building, Cambuslang. In 2008, in its 60th year, the college moved from its three buildings in East Kilbride and Cambuslang to a new campus in East Kilbride, from where it continues to operate, serving a South Lanarkshire population of 317000 residents.

The number of people economically inactive in South Lanarkshire is around 5% higher than the national average. Participation in post-school education is below the national average. The proportion of the working age population with a higher education (HE) qualification is 13% lower than the average for Scotland. In South Lanarkshire there has been, and still is, historic under-participation in post-school education. Over the past two years the college has received additional funding for strategic growth from SFC.

The college is a key partner within the South Lanarkshire Community Planning Partnership (CPP) and has significant activity related to European Social Funding (ESF). An important element of college activity is its partnership arrangement with private sector companies. The college also attracts a significant number of international learners.

The college has recently attained the Gold Standard for *Investors in People*. The college actively promotes equality and diversity in a number of ways both within the curriculum and across all the learner support functions.

The college curriculum provision is organised in three faculties: business; care; and construction. Traditionally, the delivery of programmes to prepare apprentices for employment in the construction industry has been a strong focus for the college. More recently, the college has given greater emphasis to provision of programmes in highways maintenance and renewable energy. The faculty of care provides extensively for full-time learners in care subjects and also for employed learners wishing to obtain mandatory occupational qualifications. In business, the college has formed a partnership with a regional university to deliver on campus a Bachelor of Accounting programme.

The college's revenue budget for the academic year 2010-11 is approximately £12.17m, with grant-in-aid from SFC accounting for about 66% of the total. The college activity target for 2010-11 is 39198 weighted SUMs.

The external review

The external review by HMIE took place during the week beginning 25 October 2010.

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.

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 and 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 October 2010. 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;**
- **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.**

3. Summary

Strengths:

- The college has made very good progress towards achieving its strategic aims, objectives and key performance indicators.
- The college opened its new £34m purpose built campus in East Kilbride in 2008, thus successfully completing its relocation from three old school buildings and rented accommodation.
- Attainment rates for FE level programmes with a national qualification aim are consistently very high over the previous three-year period and well above sector average values.
- The college prepares learners very well for employment and further study.
- In planning for effective teaching and learning, teaching staff take very good account of the important college aim to prepare learners for employment.
- Teaching staff and guidance tutors provide very effective on-course guidance and support.
- Course teams take very good account of the views of learners, employers, statutory bodies and other stakeholders on a range of programme issues.
- An important feature of many full-time programmes is a period of very useful work experience for learners.
- Sustainability is embedded in much of the college's provision.
- The strategic aims of the college, as set out in its Strategic Plan 2008-12, *Building on Success*, place a clear focus on organisational effectiveness and meeting the needs of all learners.
- The Board of Management has a strong focus on quality assurance and enhancement, and the principalship displays outstanding leadership.
- There is very clear leadership and management in teaching faculties.
- Leadership across the wide range of services that support learners' experiences in colleges is very effective.
- Self-evaluation and development planning are very effective in taking forward the college's quality assurance and improvement processes.

Main points for action:

No main points for action were identified.

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.

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

The college has made very good progress towards achieving its strategic aims, objectives and key performance indicators. College Development Committee reports and the regular *Principal's Update* to the Board of Management identify high levels of achievement of operational objectives. The college's many achievements over the current planning period include opening its new £34m campus in East Kilbride, thus completing its relocation from three old school buildings and rented accommodation to a significantly larger campus. The college worked successfully with a large number of companies and suppliers of construction materials to design and construct a low energy, low carbon house on the college campus. The college achieved its key target of completing the low energy, low carbon house to coincide with its very successful hosting of the construction industry's UK-wide skills competition in 2009. As a result, the college was able to showcase this innovative project to apprentices and employers drawn from all parts of the UK. In pursuit of its strategic aim to prepare learners for employment, the college is a major participant in the Scottish Government's *Partnership Action for Continuing Employment* (PACE) and worked successfully with SFC and Skills Development Scotland (SDS) to provide practical support in training and retraining for over 500 employees subjected to a phased redundancy in a large international company.

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

Early retention and student retention rates for FE and HE learners are good and broadly at sector average values, with a rising trend. Attainment rates for FE programmes with a national qualification aim are consistently very high over the previous three-year period and well above sector average values. The college gives high priority to improving retention and attainment and learner success is a key priority for all staff. Its arrangements for monitoring retention and attainment rates are effective. Most actions taken by staff to improve retention and attainment are successful. Most learners progress successfully to further learning or employment on completion of their studies. The majority of learners who complete the college's pre-apprenticeship programmes in construction are successful in finding employment.

How well does the college fulfil its statutory duties?

The college promotes equality and diversity through a range of suitable policies, schemes and procedures. It provides regular and effective training and continuing professional development on equality and diversity through staff development days and the annual staff conference. The college monitors well learner retention and attainment rates at college, faculty and programme level by race, disability and gender. Staff carry out detailed analyses of the data, investigate underlying factors and take action to address issues raised. However, course review reports and course self-evaluations do

not yet include the outcome of teams' analyses of equalities data. The college has an effective policy for protecting young people and adults at risk and safeguarding staff. It ensures that all staff are trained regularly and systematically in these aspects. The college has a clear health and safety policy and suitable health and safety arrangements and procedures.

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

All college programmes are well designed and meet employer needs very well. The college provides a strongly vocational curriculum focusing on economically viable activity to provide skilled employees for the Scottish economy. It works in close collaboration and partnership with the Sector Skills Council for the construction industry, with the Scottish and Northern Ireland Plumbing Employers' Federation (SNIPEF) and a very large number of small and medium size enterprises to meet the education and training needs of the construction industry. These needs include upskilling in micro-renewable technologies. The college has enhanced opportunities for learner progression by establishing articulation arrangements with a number of higher education institutions (HEIs). The college's arrangements to support learners are flexible and effective, and include a broad range of accessible modes of study, programme start dates and support for learners with additional needs. Learners' individual needs are communicated clearly to relevant teaching staff and assistive technology is employed as required. Positive and productive relationships between the college and the Scottish Wider Access Programme (SWAP) West contribute to very successful access programmes in humanities. The college responds very well to employer needs. As a result of the loss of provision of education and training in glazing craft in Scotland, it recently began to offer provision in this area and is the sole college provider in Scotland.

How well do programmes and services meet learner needs?

The college prepares learners very well for employment and further study. It provides regular opportunities for learners to engage with industry through external visits, work placements and class talks from local employers. These opportunities help motivate learners and support them in their development of employability skills. The college provides very high levels of support to redundant local workers through PACE programmes. It works very well with employers to ensure that successful learners secure employment, particularly in construction. The college cooperates very well with South Lanarkshire Council to meet the needs of school pupils and other young people. Staff design programmes with flexible entry and exit points to help learners to move and progress between programmes, including those college-based and work-based provision. The college gives high priority to increasing learner and staff awareness of sustainability issues. Sustainability is a key element embedded in much of the college's provision. Staff have been successful in accessing private funding to allow substantial numbers of apprentices who have been made redundant to complete their programmes. Learner satisfaction levels across the college are very high.

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

Most learners complete their programme and attain the qualifications they set out to achieve. More than a few learners achieve success in awards schemes and

competitions. Recent successes include the SQA Skills Competitor of the Year 2009, *SkillBuild* and the Helena Kennedy Awards 2009. Most learners use personal learning planning well to reflect on and enhance their essential skills and vocational skills. They do this in a variety of ways, including through use of their personal learning plan, with a focus on employability in the *Moving On* section of the plan, electronic portfolios, dedicated units on reflective practice and guidance sessions. Across the curriculum areas, learners enhance their employability and citizenship skills by participating in a range of relevant activities within the college and the local community. A few learners participated in the recent National Union of Students (NUS) carbon footprint project and gained skills in reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The college celebrates and records learner success very effectively. The publicising of exceptional work and achievements by learners on *student excellence boards* located throughout the college encourages them to work harder and achieve their goals.

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?

College staff take care to match curriculum content, delivery modes and learning resources to the needs of learners at different levels. Most programmes provide opportunities for differentiated support for learners across a range of ability or experience levels. College staff make flexible arrangements to accommodate learners' individual circumstances. The college has very effective engagement with employers. For example, the faculty of construction engages with around 450 employers to identify and address their education and training needs. Learning and teaching materials reflect well the college's commitment to inclusion and to the standards of the *Quality and Equality of Learning and Teaching Materials* (QELTM) initiative. All staff continue to address this aspect of inclusion through proactive use of QELTM checklists.

How well do learners learn?

Learners work well in classes and enjoy their programmes. Almost all learners have clear plans to continue study in their subject area by progression to apprenticeships or to higher level programmes within the college. Learners are very highly motivated and almost all learners participate actively in their learning and contribute well to class discussions. Learners work well independently and also support each other through team work on a range of tasks. They respond well to the constructive feedback they receive from teaching staff. Learners use equipment and learning resources competently and with confidence appropriate to their levels of experience. Learners use the college virtual learning environment (VLE) well in some classes to support their studies. They are making clear progress in their knowledge and skills development, and in SVQ programmes they use electronic portfolios very well to document and reflect on their progress and next steps. Learners have a strong sense of ownership of their learning.

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

Teaching staff have up-to-date professional and subject knowledge. Almost all adapt and vary their teaching approaches very well to meet the needs of a wide range of learners and their prior experiences. Almost all teaching staff adopt teaching approaches which are well designed to promote learners' vocational knowledge, understanding and skills. They build well on prior learning when introducing new topics and tasks. They identify well for learners the needs of employers and industry, contributing effectively as a result to the development of learners' employability skills. A few teaching staff do not use questioning effectively to engage all learners in the work of the class, resulting in poor attention by a few learners. Teaching staff make good links to essential skills in their teaching and help learners to see the relevance of these and their usefulness. Some teaching staff do not deal effectively enough with poor timekeeping by more than a few learners and this disrupts the early stages of some lessons.

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

Working relationships between staff and learners are supportive and constructive. Learners value the support they receive from teaching staff. In almost all programmes, learners work well with teaching staff to plan practical activities. Lessons are well planned and organised, and almost all have clear aims and objectives which are discussed with learners at the start of each class. In planning for effective teaching and learning, teaching staff take very good account of the important college aim to prepare learners for employment. They promote and require high standards of learner work, including aspects of health and safety. The learning environment within the college campus is of a very high standard and complements well the work of all staff in enriching the learning experiences for learners. Teaching staff plan well for learners' development of skills for citizenship and for employability, and take good account of the capacities and principles of *Curriculum for Excellence*. Sustainability is built into many areas of the curriculum.

How well is assessment used to promote effective learning?

Staff plan assessments well and pay close attention to scheduling assessments to reinforce and support learning. They prepare learners well for summative assessment through practice tasks. Teaching staff provide high quality feedback to learners on their skills development and make good use of opportunities in class to assess and reinforce learners' knowledge and understanding. They make appropriate adjustments to assessment methods when necessary in order to eliminate any disadvantage to learners. All staff encourage learners to reflect on their own progress and to collaborate with their peers on self-reflection. As a result, learners develop skills in self-evaluation and reflective practice, and demonstrate benchmarking of their own work against national standards and the work of their peers.

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

Almost all learners receive clear information about programme options prior to applying to the college and during the interview process. Guidance tutors provide very effective on-course guidance and support, including through regular progress meetings with learners. A very helpful *Student Handbook* sets out clearly the responsibilities of learners and the standards expected of them. Many learners make very good use of their personal learning plans (PLP) and discuss their plans in personal interviews with course tutors. They are very aware of their strengths and areas for development and form productive and trusting relationships with teaching staff. Teaching and support staff work well together to ensure that learners' needs are met, and arrangements to support learners with additional support needs work effectively. Support workers from South Lanarkshire Council work well with college staff to provide school pupils with additional support in college. A *Jobcentre Plus* office is located in the college and provides helpful advice to learners on next steps into employment.

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

Teaching staff seek feedback regularly from learners about learning and teaching and make adjustments to their practice based on professional reflection. This is an important feature of the college's approach to quality enhancement and improvement.

Team working within course teams is very strong and staff work very well together and with learners to review programmes and their approaches to learning and teaching. Staff meet regularly in course teams and more informally to discuss areas for enhancement and improvement. Course teams take very good account of the views of learners, employers, statutory bodies and other stakeholders to ensure that programme content is up-to-date and meets the needs of learners and employers. Course team and faculty self-evaluation reports are clear with action points for enhancement and improvement. Actions are followed up effectively at team and senior management level to ensure implementation. The evaluation of services to support learners is comprehensive and the college has established action plans to address weaknesses, areas for development and to sustain and build on strengths. Class representatives attend and contribute to aspects of course team meetings, and staff respond well to points raised by learners. They take effective action to address issues and improve learners' experiences.

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 teaching staff are positive and open. Learners make suggestions about enhancements to learning and teaching as they arise, as well as using the more formal class representative and course team arrangements. Learners welcome and make use of the good opportunities available to influence and enhance their learning experience through their engagement with all staff.

Staff adapt their teaching approaches and the sequencing of learning activities in response to feedback received from learners. This occurs across all programme areas, through both formal and informal discussions. Learners feel that their views are acted upon. Examples of staff adapting their approaches as a result of suggestions from learners include more group discussions, recapping by teaching staff of key topics, the provision of additional learning materials on the college VLE and the sequencing of topics and units.

Most learners use personal learning planning well to enhance their own learning. They plan very effectively in a number of ways, including through use of their PLP documents, electronic portfolios, the study of units in their programme on reflective practice and through timetabled guidance sessions. Most learners find these arrangements very helpful in enabling them to reflect on their learning priorities and in tracking progress in their learning. In some class tutor groups, learners and staff use PLPs very effectively during planned individual guidance meetings to review progress and plan next steps.

Learners are successful in developing essential skills which prepare them for employment or further learning. They engage regularly with industry through external visits, class talks from local employers and work-related opportunities. These opportunities include visits to local schools to demonstrate to school pupils the vocational skills they have acquired. College learners display high levels of confidence in their vocational skills during these visits. The college places a high value on citizenship skills, and most learners participate in activities through which they develop these skills. For example, learners on beauty therapy programmes have benefited from the *Beauty Showcase*, where they provided an open evening of beauty treatments and raised money for charity. They worked well with learners from other programmes to develop their own organisational and employability skills and record their own progress and skills development throughout this process.

An important feature of many full-time programmes is a period of work experience for learners during which they have opportunities to practise their vocational skills and to develop their employability and essential skills. This period of work experience is very helpful in reinforcing for learners the importance of their vocational and essential skills in enabling them to become effective employees.

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

Most class representatives have attended *sparqs* training and this helps them to speak for their peers confidently at course team meetings and to identify clearly the views of learners in relation to quality enhancements and improvements. To date, most representatives have completed training in order to support them in this role, and the college has planned further training. Representatives attend course team review meetings each year and contribute well to discussions with staff of areas for possible enhancement and improvement. They take good account of the views of their peers in identifying topics for discussion. However, they do not always participate fully in all relevant agenda items in course team meetings. As a result, they do not always have comprehensive opportunities to contribute fully to quality improvement and enhancement across all relevant areas of course team evaluations.

The college *Quality Unit* organises a series of focus groups with class representatives in order to gather feedback on their college experiences. As a result, appropriate actions for improvement and enhancement are implemented. These are publicised effectively to learners via *You Said, We Did* posters displayed prominently around the college.

Learners are represented effectively on the Board of Management and relevant college committees. The college took good account of the views of learners during the recent development of its *Climate Change Action Plan*. Learners contribute very well to quality enhancement by expressing their views in a number of ways, including online surveys of learner views. Staff and learners collaborate in the design of these surveys which have a very high response rate. College committees, teams and staff members respond constructively to the views expressed by learners in these surveys.

Significant numbers of college learners represent the college successfully in local, national and UK skill competitions. They act as very effective ambassadors for the college and set a good example for their peers to follow. Such participation is very effective in preparing learners for employment. Prize-winning learners demonstrate very well the skills and personal qualities which lead to success in their chosen vocational area. Through a wide range of charitable fund-raising activities, learners raise significant amounts of money for charitable causes. These include *Wear it Pink Day*, *Children in Need* and *World Aids Day*. All learners are aware of the college's contributions to the local community. However, many learners, particularly those following block-release or other forms of part-time study, are not fully aware of the Student Association and its activities.

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.

The strategic aims of the college, as set out in its Strategic Plan 2008-12, *Building on Success*, place a clear focus on meeting the needs of all learners. These aims include commitments to equality and diversity, appropriate and relevant programmes, partnership working, and innovation and efficiency. The plan also addresses Scottish Government priorities. The strategic aims underpin very well the college priority to prepare learners effectively for employment.

The Board of Management has a strong focus on quality assurance and enhancement. Members of the Board engage regularly with senior college staff to take forward the quality improvement and enhancement agenda of the college. The Board receives reports and updates to assist it in monitoring and reviewing college performance in achieving operational targets. The principalship displays outstanding leadership in engaging and motivating staff to maintain and learners to benefit from the highest quality of service. All members of the senior management team place a strong emphasis on effective management of the college and ensure the best possible service to learners. Senior managers provide very strong leadership on sustainability. As a signatory to the *Universities and Colleges Climate Commitment for Scotland (UCCCfS)*, the college published in March 2010 a comprehensive five-year climate change action plan with measurable targets and timescales to achieve a significant reduction in its greenhouse gas emissions.

Teaching faculties have very clear leadership and management responsibilities, with the heads and deputy heads of faculty leading curriculum managers and course team leaders very effectively to ensure high quality services for learners. Course team leaders also provide strong leadership of their teams. Programme teams ensure that learners have appropriate opportunities to develop essential skills, including citizenship and employability. However, approaches to the development of core skills for learners on full-time FE programmes are not sufficiently systematic to ensure that all learners have opportunities to attain certification for their development of these skills.

The college has introduced the *Promoting Success* scheme for staff in unpromoted positions. The scheme develops the leadership skills of participants, enabling them to consider career advancement, and the college to identify future leaders. The college has developed clear standards of competence for teaching staff. These enable staff to understand the requirements of their role and to reflect on their own competence in carrying out their teaching duties. A well-targeted continuing professional development strategy for teaching staff has resulted in more than 90% of teaching staff gaining a teaching qualification. The strategy also includes an effective and popular learning and teaching induction programme for new teaching staff, *Expert v Experienced* workshops to enable staff to share good practice, and the *Professional Discussion of Learning and Teaching* initiative.

Leadership across the wide range of services that support learners is very effective. Managers in MIS and Student Services teams have devised and implemented very effective ICT systems to support teaching staff in recording and monitoring learner

attendance and progress. Consequently, teaching staff have more accurate information than previously and have greater access to the information. The college plans to make this service available to learners through a broad range of technologies. Centrally-based learning support staff provide a very high level of support to learners. They liaise well with teaching staff and course teams to provide feedback on actions implemented to support referred learners.

In addition to its standards of competence for teaching staff, the college has set out standards of competence for support staff that enable staff to understand the requirements of their role. Staff in both Student Services and Human Resources lead very well the college's approaches to safeguarding and child protection. As a result, college staff understand very well the college procedures to safeguard young people and vulnerable adults.

Self-evaluation and development planning are very effective. For learning and teaching, faculty evaluations and plans draw on the work of course teams and curriculum managers. The college has redesigned its course reporting documentation to enable course teams to evaluate their programmes for relevance to the capacities and principles of *Curriculum for Excellence*. Support services produce comprehensive and helpful self-evaluations, leading to meaningful action planning for improvement. Learners contribute regularly and effectively to self-evaluation processes, through participation in surveys, lesson evaluations, and also through contributions to course team meetings, class representative meetings and focus groups. Most class representatives have attended *sparqs* training and this helps them to represent their peers confidently at course team meetings.

The Board of Management, through the work of its *Development Committee* and through the *Principal's Update*, receives reports that enable it to monitor effectively progress towards achievement of college aims and targets. These reports identify the extent of achievement as well as recommendations and action points arising from internal and external reports. The college *Management Charter* describes for all staff and learners its commitment to its mission, values and ethos.

The college *Academic Board* monitors and reviews the improvement action plans produced by curriculum managers to ensure that action plans are fully implemented. The *Quality Enhancement Group* works very effectively with teaching staff to promote good practice in learning and teaching approaches.

8. Signposting excellent and sector-leading and innovative practice

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.

8.1 Excellent practice in equality and diversity

The strategic and operational plans of the college set out clearly its focus on equality and diversity. The planning cycle takes good account of these issues. Highly visible and attractive promotional materials related to equality and diversity serve well to remind staff, learners and stakeholders of the importance of these issues. As a result of the high profile of equality and diversity, learners from all curriculum areas demonstrate clearly their understanding of and commitment to equality and diversity. Learners on hairdressing and beauty programmes have organised an international beauty day and cover ethnic hair types in their studies. Learners have access to materials for health and safety in a range of languages. The principal chairs an *Equality Group* with membership from staff and learners. This group reviews all equality-related statistics and outcomes of impact assessments. It promotes and evaluates activities to enhance equality and diversity in the college. The college has formed a number of very helpful partnerships with external agencies to ensure that it takes appropriate account of college priorities in these areas and the needs of a wide range of learners. These agencies include: *Stonewall*; *LGBT Youth Scotland*; the college chaplaincy; *See me*; *One Scotland*; and *One Workplace Equal Rights*. Learner attainment is evaluated by reference to equalities and action taken at programme level to address issues arising from equality or diversity issues. Staff actively support learner engagement in events designed to promote equality and diversity. Learners are involved in implementing an annual equality week, and this enhances their understanding of the importance of promoting good relations within the diverse college community.

8.2 Excellent practice in the *Professional Discussion of Learning and Teaching* scheme

The college *Quality Enhancement Group* has implemented a systematic and comprehensive strategy to encourage staff to improve on the quality and impact of learning, teaching and assessment practice. All teaching staff participate, developing deeper reflection on their practice and confidence in professional discussion for internal review and self-evaluation. With the support and involvement of staff and their professional bodies, the college has enhanced outcomes for learners and staff by implementing a *3 lens approach*, based on reflective practice principles, and aligned with the HMIE quality framework. Each lesson is evaluated using three sources of evidence: feedback from learners; a review of the teaching approaches of the lesson, based on the observations of a trained college reviewer; and a professional discussion with the member of teaching staff. These three perspectives combine to provide a robust evaluation of the effectiveness of the lesson and identify appropriate actions for improvement and enhancement. Examples of improvement and enhancement include: effective contributions by learners to lesson planning to help ensure that their needs are fully addressed; enhanced self-confidence of teaching staff in their approaches to learning and teaching; enhanced use of ICT by teaching staff in lessons; and the further development of reflection on their teaching by staff. Good practice in learning, teaching

and assessment is widely shared and the already high levels of attainment continue to improve.

8.3 Excellent practice in supporting learners into employment

The college has long-established and strong links with local employers in health, construction, energy and civil engineering, and has a very strong reputation for developing curriculum provision that meets their needs. New challenges for these employers and the college have emerged recently with the loss of jobs and apprenticeship places. A significant factor in meeting these challenges has been the college's innovative approaches to funding, resulting, for example, in many apprentices completing their programme of study despite losing their traditional means of funding. The college has responded swiftly and flexibly to wider economic and employment issues and has adapted its approaches to training. By working closely with employers, *Jobcentre Plus* and through effective community planning, the college has improved access to its programmes and services to support learners into employment in a very competitive market. In addition, the college has used sponsorship funding to provide programmes not available through its core funding. Partnerships with local employers in construction and renewable energy, along with the local council regeneration team, have resulted in the college linking training provision and programmes directly to job vacancies in these occupational sectors. Most learners recruited to these programmes secure employment on completion. The college has enhanced its partnership with *Jobcentre Plus* with the location on campus of a *Jobcentre Action Point*. This service, open to enrolled learners and the public, provides access both to job vacancies and to relevant information on training programmes in the college. The college inclusiveness team has used European Social Fund (ESF) grants very effectively to support long-term unemployed people into work. As a result, outcomes for learners on *Get Ready for Work* programmes have been very successful and well above the national average.

8.4 Sector-leading and innovative practice in partnership action for career change and continuing employment

In response to redundancies at a local manufacturer of electronics components, the college has been highly responsive and proactive. It has engaged with the employer, SFC and Skills Development Scotland to identify and deliver support, under the Scottish Government's *Partnership Action for Continuing Employment (PACE)* scheme, and coordinate the retraining of the local workforce. College staff engaged with many employees, providing an opportunity for them to consider retraining options and next steps at a challenging time of personal change. They interviewed employees during work shifts on site. These interviews generated around 600 enquiries about retraining in college. The college produced a prospectus of programmes based on identified needs and obtained funding from SFC to deliver these programmes. In addition, the college offered a one-stop service for provision, which it does not routinely offer in East Kilbride, at neighbouring colleges and education providers. More than 700 learners have taken up retraining in gas, renewable energy and health programmes. Through its collaboration with the Scottish Wider Access Programme (SWAP), the college has supported access to higher education institutions (HEI). Flexible start dates for programmes have been well aligned to the planned redundancy schedule. Around 80% of participants have achieved successful outcomes: they have found employment in new sectors; have become self-employed; have embarked on training with a guaranteed job

on completion; or are progressing to further study in HEIs. College evaluations have confirmed the positive impact of this initiative.

8.5 Excellent practice in the *Promoting Success* staff development initiative

The college has demonstrated its continuing commitment to quality improvement through an innovative staff development programme for unpromoted teaching and support staff. As part of a long term strategy to build leadership and to plan for succession, the college has developed and implemented an active learning programme for staff interested in career advancement. The initiative has been designed to engage a wide range of staff in developing leadership and management skills, thus enabling them to challenge and influence the future direction of the college. Around 10% of staff are participating after a selection process involving the college principal and college representatives of professional bodies. Participants engage in assignments, present their findings, prepare reports and undertake learning based on visits to employers or other colleges. These external visits have enabled participants to form helpful and productive partnerships and liaison with colleagues in industry and commerce and with peers in other colleges. Participating staff have engaged in self-evaluative practices such as reflective logs and improved dialogue with colleagues to identify areas for improvement and enhancement. They have developed skills in proposing improvement and enhancement to current practices. These proposals have included: improvements to staff career review, carried out in collaboration with the college human resource team; enhancements to the college timetabling systems; and the annual staff conference. The impact of the work of this group is clear as the college has implemented all of these proposals. This group and its individual members have become influential in taking forward the quality improvement and enhancement agenda in the college.

8.6 Sector-leading and innovative practice in partnerships to develop environmental sustainability using low energy, low carbon initiatives

The college has established a reputation as an innovative provider of education and training in sustainability through a comprehensive strategy that has influenced the college portfolio of programmes, the college estate and its approaches to energy conservation. In pursuit of this strategy, it has developed key partnerships across a range of employment sectors. One of the projects that has emerged from this strategy is the partnership with over 50 local and national construction companies to build an affordable low energy house in a prominent position on the college campus. This represents Scotland's first affordable, low energy, low carbon house capable of mass production. The presence of the house on campus represents very well the college's commitment to sustainability and to associated education and training for sustainable development. As a result of this initiative, the college has secured SFC funding to deliver programmes of knowledge, understanding and skills for sustainability during 2010-11. New programmes have been developed and delivered. Learners have accessed new and renewed training programmes in micro-renewable energy technologies, enhancing, for example the traditional range of plumbing skills which they develop on their programmes. Learners are involved in the NUS carbon footprint programme, and there is learner representation on the college sustainability committee. Awareness and understanding of the importance of reusing and reducing energy is promoted to learners in college via posters, timetabled visits to the local wind farm or

learning activity scheduled in the low energy house. The college has participated in identifying good practice on behalf of the *Carbon Trust*, gathering data to assist in reducing energy consumption, and has hosted a number of national conferences on sustainability. The results of field testing of low-energy and low-carbon design and installation, using the low energy, low carbon house are influencing changes in architectural practice and are helpful in evaluating the effectiveness of construction materials. The college has gained a number of prestigious awards for innovation in environment and sustainability.

9. What happens next?

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

Iain Lawson
HM Inspector

10. How can you contact us?

If you would like a printed copy of this report

This report has been produced as a web-only publication and is available on our website at www.hmie.gov.uk.

This supports the sustainability of natural resources and the Scottish Government's Greener Scotland agenda. Copies of the report can be printed for individual use. Please contact the Business Management and Communications Team (BMCT) if you wish to enquire about our arrangements for translated text or copies of this report in other formats.

If you wish to comment about this college report or about college external reviews

We welcome comment on our reports. It is important, too, that we act upon the views of readers of our reports. To assist us in this process, we would encourage you to click the link below which will take you to our readability survey.

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If you wish to comment about any of our reviews, contact us at HMIEenquiries@hmie.gsi.gov.uk or alternatively you should write in the first instance to BMCT, HM Inspectorate of Education, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Almondvale Way, Livingston EH54 6GA.

You can find our complaints procedure on our website or alternatively you can contact our Complaints Manager, at the address above or by telephoning 01506 600259.

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Appendix 1

Glossary of terms

CPP	Community Planning Partnership
ESF	European Social Fund
FE	Further Education
HE	Higher Education
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HMIE	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education
HNC	Higher National Certificate
HND	Higher National Diploma
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
LGBT	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender
MIS	Management Information Systems
NUS	National Union of Students
PACE	Partnership Action for Continuing Employment
PLP	Personal Learning Plan
QELTM	Quality and Equality of Learning and Teaching Materials
SCQF	Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework
SDS	Skills Development Scotland
SFC	Scottish Funding Council
SNIPeF	Scottish and Northern Ireland Plumbing Employers' Federation
sparqs	Student Participation in Quality Scotland
SQA	Scottish Qualifications Authority
SVQ	Scottish Vocational Qualification
SWAP	Scottish Wider Access Programme
UCCCfS	Universities and Colleges Climate Commitment for Scotland
VLE	Virtual Learning Environment

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 MASTERS DEGREE / MASTERS DEGREE POST GRADUATE DIPLOMA POST GRADUATE CERTIFICATE	SVQ5
10				HONOURS DEGREE GRADUATE DIPLOMA GRADUATE CERTIFICATE	
9			PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AWARD	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 ten 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.