



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

**Cardonald College**

**A summary of the main report**

**22 August 2008**

## The review process

HM Inspectors undertake an independent review of the quality of provision in further education colleges on behalf of the Scottish Further Education Funding Council 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 lay member.

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

During reviews, members of 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.

This report contains confidence statements that express the review team's overall evaluation of *learning and teaching process*, *learner progress and outcomes* and *leadership and quality management*. It also contains grades for particular aspects of provision.

The primary purpose of this report is to convey a summary of the main outcomes arising from the review.

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

very good	major strengths
good	strengths outweigh weaknesses
fair	some important weaknesses
unsatisfactory	major weaknesses

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

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

A separate report has been published simultaneously to convey fully the main outcomes arising from the review, to acknowledge the college's strengths and to provide a clear agenda for future action to improve and enhance quality.

Both reports are available on the HMIE website [www.hmie.gov.uk](http://www.hmie.gov.uk). The website will give you easy access to review and inspection reports and a wide range of other publications. It will also provide you with more information on the work of HMIE and its role in Scottish education.

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# 1. Introduction

## The college and its context

*In carrying out the review of Cardonald College, HMIE took the following college context fully into account.*

Cardonald College was established in 1972 and is situated in the south west of Glasgow. Most provision is delivered from the main campus in Mosspark and the nearby Priesthill campus. The college also uses a large number of other premises for its substantial outreach provision. The college is nearing the end of a three-year campus redevelopment project, which has seen the creation of a new Skills Centre for Construction and related trades, and a Childrens' Centre, both opened in August 2006. A full refurbishment of the ten-storey tower block was due for completion shortly after the review finished.

The college attracts nearly 10,000 learners each year, with around 2,300 studying on a full-time basis and currently delivers around 73,000 Weighted Student Units of Measurement (WSUMs) of learner activity. Around 39% of college enrolments are learners from the 20% most deprived datazone areas, compared with a sector average of 24%. Most learners come from the surrounding local communities. The college employs around 600 staff and is an important local employer.

The college serves the needs of its local communities in the south west of Glasgow. It also delivers more specialist curriculum provision in areas such as fashion, textiles, jewellery design, and water operations and attracts learners from across Scotland. The college offers a wide range of programmes, from Access (SCQF level 1) to HND (SCQF level 8). The college has well-developed partnerships and collaboration arrangements with a range of key Glasgow City and community organisations. These include, the two South West Glasgow Community Planning Boards and the Glasgow Southwest Regeneration Agency, with whom the college works to address the needs of local communities, including young people in need of more choices and more chances and those furthest away from the labour market. The college has strong and well-established links with local schools. Substantial and increasing collaboration exists between the college and Glasgow City Council's training and vocational unit and East Renfrewshire Schools' Vocational Coordinator.

The college has promoted innovative approaches to learning and teaching, and has led or been involved in a number of Scottish Funding Council's (SFC) strategic development fund initiatives, such as *Focus on Learning* and *BlendEd*.

The college's revenue budget for 2007-08 is £19.1 million with grant-in-aid from SFC accounting for 76% of the total.

## The review

The review by HMIE took place in two phases in the weeks beginning 10 March 2008 (*review phase one*) and 12 May 2008 (*follow-through phase*).

The review team examined key cross-college functions and processes that have a direct impact on the quality of the learner experience. The review also covered eight subject areas in the college, together with a focus on core skills and flexible learning, as follows.

Art and design  
Business, management and administration  
Care  
Computing and ICT  
Construction  
Education and training  
Special programmes  
Sport and leisure

These areas, in which the provision ranged from levels 2 to 8 of the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF), accounted for more than 60% of the college's work.

The review involved scrutiny of documentation provided by the college and interviews with senior and middle managers, Board members with a responsibility for overseeing the work of committees concerned with educational issues, staff, learners, employers, external agencies and other users of the college. During *review phase one*, the review team focused on learning and teaching, learner progress and outcomes, and leadership and quality management. During the *follow-through phase*, the review team explored a number of issues requiring further scrutiny and discussed fully the examples of sector-leading and innovative practice identified in this report.

## 2. Executive summary

*The following are holistic judgements made by HMIE on the basis of review activities which took place in March 2008 and May 2008. These judgements relate to the key areas of learning and teaching process, learner progress and outcomes, and leadership and quality management.*

### 2.1 HMIE is confident that:

- **the college has in place effective learning and teaching processes.**
- **learners are progressing well and achieving appropriate outcomes, overall.**
- **the college is managing well and improving the quality of its services for learners.**

### 2.2 HMIE identified a number of ways in which the college demonstrated its ability to deliver quality provision and services, and sustain and enhance them.

- Learning and teaching were *very good* in four of the eight subject areas evaluated and *good* in four areas.
- Learner progress and outcomes were *very good* in two of the areas evaluated, and *good* in six areas.
- The Board of Management worked well with senior managers to set the strategic direction of the college.
- The acting principal provided supportive and effective leadership and the senior management group showed strong leadership on and commitment to, equalities and diversity.
- The college had strong, well-established strategic links with key agencies promoting community development and local regeneration, and was highly valued by partners for its quality of partnership working.
- Highly committed staff provided learners with a high standard of guidance and support.
- An attractive and modern learning environment had been created in the main campus as a result of the college's comprehensive redevelopment project.
- Well-embedded self-evaluation arrangements provided learners with opportunities to provide feedback on their learning experiences.
- Staff commitment to improving the quality of the learner experience was strong.

### 2.3 The college should seek to improve:

- operational guidance to staff on improving retention rates;
- arrangements for the diagnosis and screening for learners' core skills needs;
- signage within the buildings, including fire refuge areas;
- child protection and equality training for all staff; and
- arrangements to evaluate and monitor the quality of learning and teaching.

## 2.4 Summary of grades awarded

<b>Subject area</b>	<b>Learning and teaching process</b>	<b>Learner progress and outcomes</b>
Art and design	Very good	Very good
Business, management and administration	Good	Good
Care	Very good	Good
Computing and ICT	Good	Good
Construction	Good	Good
Education and training	Very good	Good
Special programmes	Very good	Very good
Sport and leisure	Good	Good

<b>Cross-college elements</b>	<b>Grade</b>
Educational leadership, direction and management	Very good
Access and inclusion	Very good
Guidance and support	Very good
Resources and services to support the learner	Good
Staff	Good
Quality assurance	Very good
Quality improvement	Good

### 3. Overall findings in subject areas

*This section of the report summarises our overall findings in subject areas. A full version of our findings in each subject is available in section 4 of the main report, available from our website at [www.hmie.gov.uk](http://www.hmie.gov.uk).*

#### 3.1 Learning and teaching process

**HMIE is confident that the college has in place effective learning and teaching processes.**

- Almost all learners were motivated and engaged effectively with learning activities.
- In almost all subject areas, learners used resources well, including ICT to enhance their learning.
- Across almost all subject areas, learners reflected well on their learning to support and develop skills and knowledge.
- In the majority of subject areas, teaching staff demonstrated high levels of subject expertise and this enhanced their classes.
- In most subject areas, teaching staff applied effective teaching and learning approaches to support learning activities.
- Across almost all subject areas, teaching staff used resources well in their teaching to stimulate and encourage learning.
- In almost all subject areas, teaching staff created positive relationships with learners and this enhanced the environment and conditions for learning.
- In all subject areas, staff planned learning and teaching well.
- In most subject areas, staff set clear expectations of standards of work and learner behaviour.

However:

- In a few subject areas, teaching staff misjudged learner capacity for attention and concentration.
- In more than a few subject areas, teaching staff did not use questioning techniques effectively enough to extend and consolidate learning.
- In more than a few subject areas, teaching staff did not reinforce learning sufficiently.

#### 3.2 Learner progress and outcomes

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

- In most subject areas, learners made good progress in their learning and skills development.
- In the majority of subject areas, learners gained improved core skills.
- In almost all subject areas, learners enhanced their employability skills.
- In the majority of subject areas, retention rates were high on part-time programmes.



- In most subject areas, attainment rates were high on the majority of programmes.
- In most subject areas, learners progressed to further study or to employment.
- In more than a few subject areas, learners attained additional awards or qualifications.

However:

- In the majority of subject areas, retention rates were low on more than a few programmes.
- In more than a few subject areas, attainment rates were low on a few programmes.

### **3.3 Other significant factors**

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

- In more than a few subject areas, the accommodation for learning and teaching was very *good*, particularly in care, computing and ICT, and construction.
- In more than a few subject areas, high quality equipment, learning and teaching materials and the virtual learning environment (VLE) enhanced learning, particularly in art and design, computing and ICT, and special programmes.
- In more than a few subject areas, well-qualified staff and strong staff team working contributed to a positive learning environment.
- In more than a few subject areas, effective guidance encouraged and supported learners well.

## 4. Findings on leadership and quality management

*This section of the report summarises our overall findings in cross-college areas. A full version of our findings is contained in section 5 of the main report, available from our website at [www.hmie.gov.uk](http://www.hmie.gov.uk).*

**HMIE is confident that the college is managing well and improving the quality of its services for learners.**

### 4.1 Educational provision: design, planning and management

#### Educational leadership, direction and management

- Strategic and operational plans identified clear objectives to provide a wide range of vocational opportunities, promote social inclusion, and respond flexibly and positively to the diversity of learners.
- The Board of Management worked well with senior managers to set the strategic direction of the college.
- The majority of teaching and support staff contributed effectively to the planning process.
- The acting principal provided supportive and effective leadership in a difficult transition period for the college.
- The college ethos was collegiate, participative and effective, and staff were heavily involved in decision making.
- Senior managers promoted key Scottish Government priorities such as school-college partnerships, citizenship, employability, and equalities and diversity.
- The college made significant progress on almost all of its strategic objectives and most of its operational objectives.

#### Access and inclusion

- The college's clear vision for access and inclusion was prominent in its strategic and operational documents and staff at all levels shared this vision.
- Development planning took full account of inclusion and had successfully driven developments to improve inclusion to meet the needs of a diverse learner body.
- The *Equalities Forum* provided a useful focus for discussion and decision-making.
- The acting principal and senior staff had strong, well-established strategic links with key agencies promoting community development and regeneration locally and over a wider area.
- The college was highly valued by its partners for the quality of its contribution to partnership working.
- Staff worked very flexibly and responsively with a wide range of employers, community agencies and others to design and deliver programmes and services to meet diverse needs.
- The college used ICT well to promote access and inclusion.

## **4.2 Learner services, resources and staff**

### **Guidance and support**

- The college provided strong leadership for guidance and support. Clear policies and procedures were in place and staff consistently demonstrated a strong ethos of care and support for learners.
- Effective guidance and support arrangements were well understood by staff across the college who were highly committed to providing a high standard of guidance and support to meet the needs of their learners.
- The Head of Student Services and the Information Centre Manager worked well together and deployed effectively their respective teams who encouraged learner uptake of support, including extended learning support.
- Effective procedures for user evaluation and self-evaluation identified areas for improvement.
- Strong working partnerships with a range of appropriate external organisations enriched guidance and support practice and development.
- Staff provided effective and flexible support to learners who recognised how this had positively impacted on their motivation, personal development and confidence.

### **Resources and services to support the learner**

- The college had created an attractive and modern learning environment in its main campus through its comprehensive redevelopment project.
- The network and ICT systems were reliable and fast, and effective help-desk arrangements ensured a timely response to maintenance issues.
- The library was spacious, with enough quiet independent study spaces, and provided learners with an up-to-date range of books, multi-media and online resources.
- Learners had sufficient flexible access to ICT and electronic learning resource and the college had made good progress in developing materials for use on the VLE in most curriculum areas.
- A good range of assistive technologies and adapted ICT resources were available for learners with disabilities.

### **Staff**

- The college had sufficient suitably qualified teaching and support staff to meet the needs of learners.
- The college adopted a proactive and effective approach to ensuring that all staff were ICT competent. This had enabled a majority of staff to gain a relevant ICT qualification.
- Staff in outreach centres and those who could not attend formal sessions used a detailed online induction programme.
- A well-documented annual staff development and training review process identified individual training needs and informed the staff development planning process effectively.
- The college's comprehensive staff development programme allowed all staff to engage in a range of relevant CPD activities.

### **4.3 Quality assurance, improvement and enhancement**

- A comprehensive range of policies and procedures detailed quality criteria for all major areas of activity that impacted on the learner experience.
- Effective document control was maintained through effective use of the college intranet.
- Staff had clear knowledge of quality assurance procedures and understood their roles and responsibilities in quality processes well.
- Self-evaluation arrangements were well embedded within programme areas and all support areas.
- Learners had opportunities to provide feedback on their learning in a variety of ways, including end-of-unit evaluations and focus groups.
- Staff commitment to improving the quality of the learner experience was strong.
- Staff review of programmes and support areas had resulted in improvements in the quality of services to learners.
- Good practice was identified and disseminated in a range of activities across the college.
- Senior management feedback on the review of annual self-evaluation outputs at faculty and support department level was useful in identifying areas for improvement.
- The college challenge fund supported staff effectively in implementing new initiatives.

## **5. Main points for action**

### **Educational provision: design, planning and management**

- The college should provide to staff more effective operational guidance on improving retention.

### **Learner services, resources and staff**

- The college should put in place more effective arrangements for the diagnosis and screening for core skills.
- The college should improve signage within the buildings, including fire refuge areas.
- The college should ensure that all staff receive child protection and equality training.
- The college should ensure that all new teaching staff receive a systematic introduction to learning, teaching and assessment.

### **Quality assurance, improvement and enhancement**

- The college should ensure that programme teams focus sufficiently on learning and teaching during self-evaluation to support action planning for improvement.
- The college should put in place systematic arrangements to evaluate and monitor the quality of learning and teaching.

## **6. Examples of sector-leading and innovative practice**

Examples of sector-leading and innovative practice identified during the review may be found in section 7 of the full report, available on our website at [www.hmie.gov.uk](http://www.hmie.gov.uk).

## **7. What happens next?**

The college should address weaknesses in subject areas and the main points for action associated with the findings on leadership and quality management in this report. SFC will consider the report and write to the college indicating the scope and nature of further engagement by the college with SFC and HMIE.

## **8. How can you contact us?**

### **If you would like an additional copy of this report**

Copies of this report have been sent to the principal and college staff, the Chair of the Board of Management and appropriate Members of the Scottish Parliament. Subject to availability, further copies may be obtained free of charge from HM Inspectorate of Education, Denholm House, Almondvale Business Park, Almondvale Way, Livingston EH54 6GA or by telephoning 01506 600200. Copies are also available on our website at [www.hmie.gov.uk](http://www.hmie.gov.uk).

### **HMIE feedback and complaints procedure**

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

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

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

Dr John Bowditch  
HM Inspector

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## Appendix

### The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework

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

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

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

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

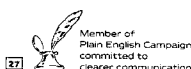


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