

EAST MIDLANDS REGIONAL QUALITY STRATEGY 2007/2010

On behalf of the East Midlands Regional Quality Improvement Partnership



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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This is the first Regional Quality Strategy produced by the Regional Quality Improvement Partnership which was set up in March 2006 with members across the post 16 learning and skills sector including the LSC, Government Office for the East Midlands (GOEM), Ofsted, Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI), Quality Improvement Agency (QIA) and the Sector Skills Council Lifelong Learning UK (LLUK) and 50% representatives from colleges and independent providers.
- 1.2 The regional quality strategy complements and supports the Framework for Excellence and the National Improvement Strategy prepared with partners by the QIA. It sets out the aims and priorities of the region and builds upon the self regulation reforms outlined in agenda for change. It anticipates the challenges ahead to enhance excellence and remove any aspect of poor provision.
- 1.3 The strategy provides the coherence, clarity and transparency necessary to enhance the reputation of the learning and skills sector.

2. Background

- 2.1 The availability of responsive post-16 education and training with the highest standards of teaching and learning is a driving force for learner choice and business excellence in the workplace.
- 2.2 The strategy covers a wide range of colleges and independent providers in the East Midlands who service the broad range of learner and employer needs:
 - 130 Work Based Learning (WBL) Providers
 - 170 School Sixth Forms
 - 25 Further Education (FE) Colleges
 - 4 Sixth Form Colleges
 - 25 institutions receiving FE funding (including Higher Education Institutions and external institutions)
 - 7 Specialist Colleges
 - 15 Personal and Community Development Learning (PCDL) Providers
 - 8 local authorities

and an extensive network of voluntary and community services, European Social Fund (ESF), Offenders' Learning and Skills Service (OLASS) and Train to Gain providers.

- 2.3 Only 3 FE colleges and 1 WBL Provider have beacon status which is awarded by Ministers as recognition of excellence and innovation within the learning and skills sector; the smallest proportion of any LSC region. Conversely, following inspection, the region has a relatively small number of inadequate providers, indicating that a high proportion of our provision is satisfactory or good.

3. Purpose

3.1 The purpose of the strategy is

- To have a provider network delivering training, education and learning to the highest quality and standards in the East Midlands.
- To improve the quality of the learning experience for the learner in the East Midlands.
- To set out targets of improvement and to identify key mechanism by which it can be achieved.
- To ensure excellence in approach to improving quality and standards and to determine the ways in which members of the Regional Quality Improvement Partnership in the East Midlands can support this.

4. Vision

4.1 Our vision is that by 2015, young people and adults in East Midlands will have knowledge and productive skills matching the best in the world. As an interim, the East Midlands will be the most improved region in terms of quality of provision in the country by 2009/10.

In 2015, the best quality in provision will be awarded grade 1 following inspection for Leadership & Management, Effectiveness of Provision and Achievements and Standards. The weakest provision will be grade 3.

5. Mission

5.1 To improve the quality and success of training, education and learning in the East Midlands.

5.2 To have one of the most successful, effective and efficient provider networks in the country delivering training, education and learning of the highest quality and standard, successfully meeting the needs of learners and employers within the East Midlands.

6. Aim

6.1 To raise the quality of provision to excellent and improve learner success at all levels.

Objectives

- To promote and support the sharing of best practice through peer benchmarking
- To support colleges and independent providers to develop their capacity for self improvement and self assessment
- To increase the proportion of provision that is good or excellent, to improve satisfactory provision and to eliminate inadequate provision by 2008.
- To ensure providers are responsive to the needs of employers and learners

Within the objectives we will:

- Promote equality, diversity and inclusive learning
- Contribute to local and regional learning and skills priorities

7. Scope

7.1 This strategy covers all organisations in receipt of funds from the LSC

8. Regional Performance

8.1 The Regional Quality Improvement Partnership has selected four areas of the East Midlands performance in FE and WBL that provide a regional overview of success rates and assists in setting out the key targets for 2007/08. The success rate performance of various sectors is included in Appendix II and the conclusions are described below.

8.1.1 FE Success Rates

- The East Midlands FE Success rates for all qualifications in 2004/05 are equivalent to the national average. The overall regional success rates have improved from 69% to 74% over 2 years.
- The adult success rates for long and short courses are significantly above the 16-18 success rates.
- The regional 16-18 success rates are below the national average

8.1.2 FE Success Rates in Level 2, LLDD and BME

- The regional full level 2 success rates are below the national average although the gap is narrowing and there has been a substantial regional increase in success rates from 47% to 58% in 2 years. However, level 2 success rates are significantly below the overall success rates of 74% and below national benchmarks.
- For Learners with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities the success rates are improving and comparable to the overall FE success rate of 74% and equal to the national average.
- The Black and Minority Ethnic regional success rates are above the national average although the gap is narrowing and the success rates of Leicestershire (77%) are significantly above the other counties ranging from 64% to 68%

8.1.3 Work Based Learning – full framework completions and E2E positive destinations

- The full framework regional completions in WBL have increased from 31% to 54% which is above the national average.
- The E2E positive destination level has fallen to 39%

8.1.4 Sectors – FE Success Rates

- Of the priority sectors set out in the Regional Skills Partnership – the FE success rates in construction have significantly fallen from 67% in 2002/03 to 53% in 2004/05.
- Other priority sectors including Engineering & Manufacturing Technologies and Health, Public Services and Care are significantly above the regional average in 2004/05 at 80% and 86% respectively.

8.2 Inspections

We are embarking on a regional analysis of all inspection grades for organisations who receive LSC funding. Our initial findings indicate that

- No FE colleges are at present inadequate
- 2 WBL providers are at present inadequate
- 3 Independent Specialist College is at present inadequate
- 3 PCDL providers are at present inadequate

The vast majority of provision is good or satisfactory, with pockets of unsatisfactory grades in some areas of learning.

Further Education

A total of 26 FE providers have been inspected under the old and new Common Inspection Framework. A significant proportion of learners are in grade 3 provision (45%), with 8% being in unsatisfactory and the rest are good or excellent. Leadership and Management are much better, 4% of providers are unsatisfactory (in fact this is one provider, who will be re-inspected 30 October

The grade profile for FE, under the new CIF is limited due to the low number of Colleges inspected (3 between September 2005 and August 2006), however, there is no Grade 4 provision identified and in one instance a College received Grade 1 in Capacity to Improve. See Appendix III – Inspection Sept 2005 – August 2006 for more detail.

PCDL

All 12 PCDL providers have been inspected since 2004 (under the old and new Common Inspection Framework). One third (33%) of the Leadership and Management grades and 13% of the Area of Learning grades are unsatisfactory.

Under the new CIF 5 providers have been inspected, it shows that:

- * there is no provision graded good
- * 54% is unsatisfactory and 46% satisfactory in leadership and management
- * areas of learning have been graded 31% unsatisfactory and 46% satisfactory.

Grade 4 provision is still significantly high, and in fact has increased in the Areas of Learning to 31% and 54% in Management, indicating that PCDL providers are falling further behind other mainstream providers. See Appendix III – Inspection Sept 2005 – August 2006 for more detail.

Independent Specialist Colleges

Of seven colleges who have all received an inspection:

- * 55% of the leadership and management grades are unsatisfactory, the remaining being good or satisfactory
- * 62% of the areas of learning are satisfactory, 19% good and 19% unsatisfactory.

One college has been inspected under the new CIF process with an overall grading of unsatisfactory (in leadership and management and all areas of learning).

Work Based Learning

Under the new CIF 16 WBL providers have been inspected:

- * 13% of the areas of learning are unsatisfactory and 33% satisfactory
- * 9% is unsatisfactory and 39% satisfactory in leadership and management

8.3 Conclusions

In conclusion, PCDL and Independent Specialist Colleges have very variable grades and provision in quality ranging from good to poor which means there are significant challenges to improve the quality of provision. The East Midlands picture is, however, replicated throughout the country.

Issues

Inspection is now more risk based and depending on the outcome of the Annual Assessment Visit (Ofsted), Colleges and Providers may only receive a “light” touch inspection in a small number of areas of learning and leadership and management. As the self-assessment process starts to reflect the CIF and the Framework for Excellence, and with lighter touch inspections, self-assessment grades take on more significance.

9. 2007/10 Improvement Measures

An analysis of success rate trends and inspection reports set against the wider policy initiatives of the Framework for Excellence, the national Improvement Strategy and the New Standard for employer Responsiveness, has led to the following focused improvement measures:

9.1 Provision

- Improve Grade 1 and 2 provision by 10% within the CIF with no grade 4 provision. 10% of grades to be grade 1 and 50% of the grades to be grade 2 in overall effectiveness by 2009/10.
- No provision to be at or below national floor targets or the minimum performance levels by 2008/09.

- No provision should be underperforming and not improving by 2009/10.
- All providers awarded grade 4 to achieve a grade 3 as a minimum at re-inspection.
- Increase the number of beacon status (or equivalent) FE colleges from 3 to 6 and for WBL providers from 1 to 6 by 2009/10. By 2007/08 there should be 5 FE Colleges and 4 WBL providers with Beacon Status.

9.2 Outcomes

- Improve FE learner success rates in **construction** to at least the regional average by 2008/09. This translates to an annual increase of 7%.
- Increase overall FE success rates by 2% per annum to 82% by 2009/10. Within this success rate 16-18 learners should achieve at least 78%.
- Increase Apprenticeship framework achievements for each individual provider by 5% and so contribute to a regional overall achievement of at least 59% by 2007/08.
- Increase positive progressions for the region from E2E to at least match the national average, predicted to be 50% by 2007/08. Each individual provider to improve progression by a minimum of 5% per annum.
- All providers to reach the new standard of employer responsiveness (or equivalent) by 2009/10.

These reflect our analysis of success rates and inspections. Throughout the coming year we plan to evaluate our performance further in other areas of activity, including Schools post 16 provision, Skills for Life, OLASS, Train to Gain, ESF and 14 – 19 provision. We will report on these in the next Regional Quality Strategy.

10. How we will deliver

10.1 In 2003, the LSC introduced a new framework for quality and success, which focused on ensuring that individual providers are able to meet the demands of learners, employers and local communities for learning and skills, through the provision of high quality learning and training programmes that maximise learners' success.

The Annual Planning Review and agreement of development plans with providers are at the heart of this new framework. This informs the approach to quality assurance, which will centre upon constructive and searching dialogue with providers, informed by their self-assessment and other evidence, during the Annual Planning Review.

10.2 To achieve our aims the Partnership will support:

- The strategic investment in provision that is satisfactory or better and that contributes to local and regional targets and priorities.
- The withdrawal of funding for identified poor provision.

- The sharing of best practice between members and the development of a culture of continual quality improvement.
- The promotion of on-going development relating to peer reviews supporting self assessment.
- The assessment of risk to the quality of the provision and LSC funding.
- The setting of targets for improvement, informed by national quality.
- The determination of benchmarks and review progress through the annual business cycle.
- The use performance data, findings of inspection, Ofsted Annual Assessment Visits (AAVs) and ALI monitoring reports to assess the degree to which a provider's self-assessment provides an accurate reflection of its performance, in quality and the mix and balance of provision in relation to needs and priorities.
- Where providers are able to demonstrate, through self-assessment, effective management of the risks to outstanding or good quality, a less intensive approach to the Annual Planning Review.
- Where self-assessment does not prove to be rigorous or reliable, the LSC taking appropriate action to manage the risks to delivery of the plan.
- Where provision is weak or presents a high risk to the quality of learning the LSC will work jointly with the QIA and the provider to identify appropriate support and intervention (where improvement is achievable and the cost of support is justified).
- The identification of roles and clarification of contribution made by various agencies and organisations to the national improvement strategy.
- Providers to achieve recognised quality assurance measures – especially for employer responsiveness.

11. Self Assessment

11.1 Self assessment will be central to supporting providers in meeting quality standards and in delivering continuous improvement. The self assessment report will shape the planning review dialogue between the provider and the local LSC. To provide an accurate picture of the effectiveness of the provider in meeting needs and priorities, and maximising outcomes for learners and employers, the self assessment report must be related to the provider's unique mission and comment on:

- The mix and balance of provision in relation to needs and priorities
- The quality of provision in terms of outcomes for learners and employers, with reference to appropriate benchmarks and the use of e-learning in terms of innovation.

- The implementation of strategies and objectives set out in the development plan
 - The achievement of performance measures and progress against indicators and milestones
 - The approach to inclusiveness and diversity
 - The effectiveness of risk management
- 11.2 Where providers carry out rigorous self assessment and use the findings to support continuous improvement, the Partnership can have greater confidence that agreed development plans will be delivered and will manage the associated risks accordingly. Where self assessment does not prove to be rigorous or reliable, the Partnership will take appropriate action to manage the risks to the delivery of the plan.
- 11.3 The East Midlands region has taken a national lead in developing the role of peer review in the validation of self assessment and as a quality improvement process. The Partnership supports and encourages peer review within the provider self assessment framework.
- 11.4 In support of the Framework for Excellence the self assessment will provide guidance and links between the Key Performance Indicators contained in the Framework for Excellence and questions contained in the Common Inspection Framework. Continuous improvement by the provider will therefore be supported by either Ofsted Inspection judgement or the Annual Assessment Visit which validates the Self Assessment Report.
- 11.5 The consultation process for Framework for Excellence will be finalised by April 2007. The region has 12 providers from across the learning and skills sector involved in the pilot to decide on the seven key performance indicators, relevant to each programme. In the meantime, we should work towards the introduction of the Framework for Excellence process from August 2008.

12. Support and Intervention

- 12.1 Support will vary for each individual provider depending on their needs.
- 12.2 Support will, where appropriate, be co-ordinated to provide maximum effect from the range of providers.
- 12.3 A principal focus of support will be in sharing aspects of best practice from both within and outside the sector.
- 12.4 Where the LSC Annual Planning Review and risk assessment identifies poor quality provision or lack of progress towards the achievement of headline performance measures, the LSC will discuss in collaboration with the QIA options for support and intervention from Support for Success and the Improvement Advisory Service.
- 12.5 The Partnership will support specific types of provision where a number of inspections and overall performance for a substantial part of the provision give cause for concern i.e.

- Personal and Community Development Learning.
- Specialist Residential Colleges for Learners with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities.

Both of the above have pockets of significantly good and poor performance.

- 12.6 All support mechanisms will be developed recognising that the principal responsibility for quality improvement rests with the provider.
- 12.7 A wide range of activities and projects will be identified using the support mechanisms available through QIA to develop providers, encourage cross-provider and cross-area activities, including the promotion and development of Peer Challenge activities for all providers.
- 12.8 Providers who could achieve Beacon status by 2010 will be identified by the Partnership and, in support of quality improvement, strategies for improvement and further support opportunities will be discussed with them which could lead to excellence.

13. Developing Partner Capacity

- 13.1 We recognise that we need to continue to build and develop our structures and capacity for improvement and in particular to clearly articulate:
- The structure of quality improvement, assessment and assurance in the region.
 - The role and responsibilities of all partners
 - The level of support available

14. Review and Evaluation

- 14.1 We will review our strategy annually. The purpose of the review will be to evaluate the impact of the actions taken to date and consider future arrangements, improvement measures and developments in areas already discussed, such as School post 16 provision, OLASS, Skills for Life, Train to Gain and 14-19 provision. We will undertake our review and evaluation jointly with our providers and partners and will publish the outcomes.

APPENDIX I

Partners

The DfES will develop the policy framework for quality improvement; programme management and performance management arrangements for partner agencies, thereby creating a system capable of effective delivery and with effective accountabilities.

The LSC has a single goal: to improve the skills of England's young people and adults to make sure we have a workforce that is world class standard. It is responsible for planning and funding high quality vocational education and training for everyone.

The LSC is responsible for assuring the quality of provision and the effectiveness of providers in meeting skills needs and priorities. It is best placed to monitor the effectiveness of organisational management because of its established links and regular contact with colleges and providers.

Inspectorates will decide on the scope and scale of the inspection based on their analysis of provider performance. Inspection will be risk-proportionate, identifying provision that needs improvement and also making judgements about the effectiveness of providers' self assessments. The Inspectorates will report on the effectiveness of improvement strategies set out in the provider development plans and are responsible for assessing the quality of provision.

The Quality Improvement Agency (QIA) is responsible for supporting and enabling self improvement through leading the development of a national improvement strategy for the sector, working with the LSC, Inspectorates and other core partners. Having identified the strategic quality improvement priorities, it will commission improvement services and materials to enable the sector to improve and develop its capacity. It will quality assure these services, giving providers confidence in what they purchase from the marketplace. It will advise and support providers and broker improvement activity and capacity to meet national priorities – e.g. Skills and 14–19 proposals.

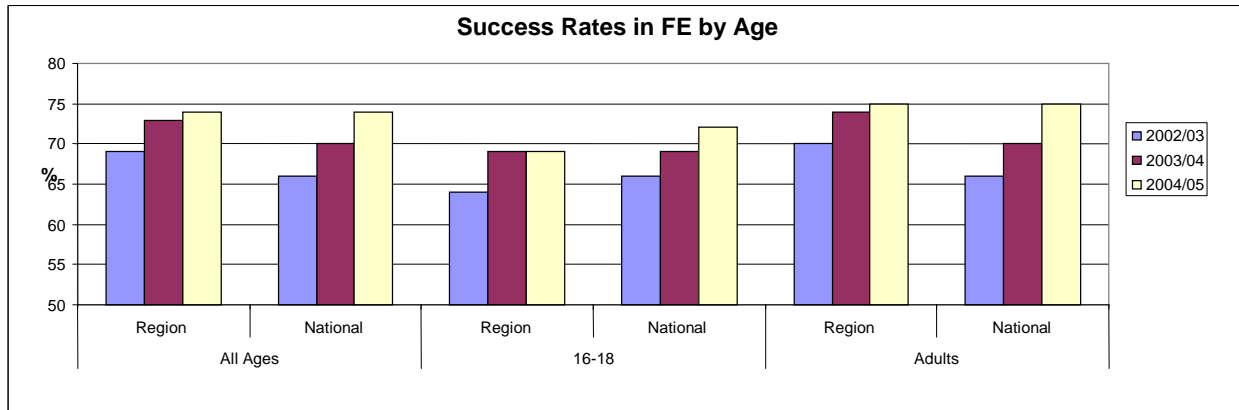
Government Office for the East Midlands (GOEM) will bring a strong 14-19, adult and workforce development dimension to the Partnership.

Lifelong Learning UK (LLUK) is the independent employer led Sector Skills Council (SSC) for further education; higher education; community learning and development; work based learning; and libraries, archives and information services. It is licensed by the UK government to set standards for occupational competence in the delivery and support of learning and provide the strategic perspective for workforce planning and development for the sector across the four countries of the UK.

Providers and colleges have primary responsibility for their own self-improvement; are individually and collectively responsible for improving their own quality.

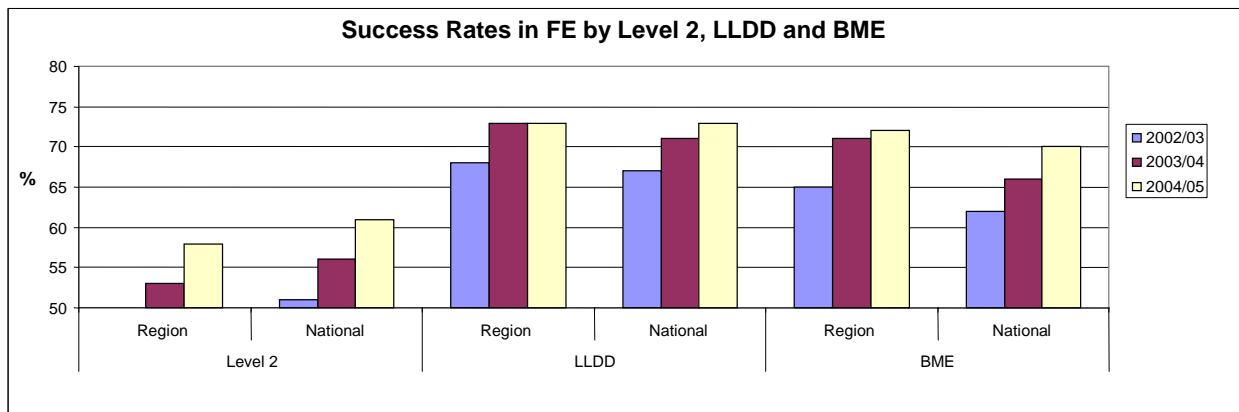
APPENDIX II - SUCCESS RATE DATA

Success Rates in FE



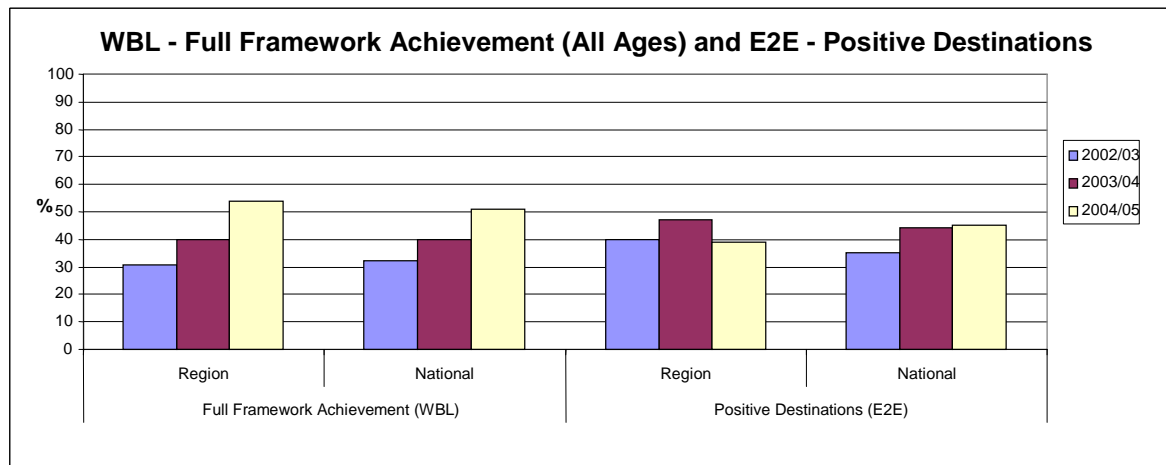
	Success rates in FE by Age					
	All Ages		16-18		Adults	
	Region	National	Region	National	Region	National
2002/03	69	66	64	66	70	66
2003/04	73	70	69	69	74	70
2004/05	74	74	69	72	75	75

FE Success Rates in Level 2, LLDD and BME



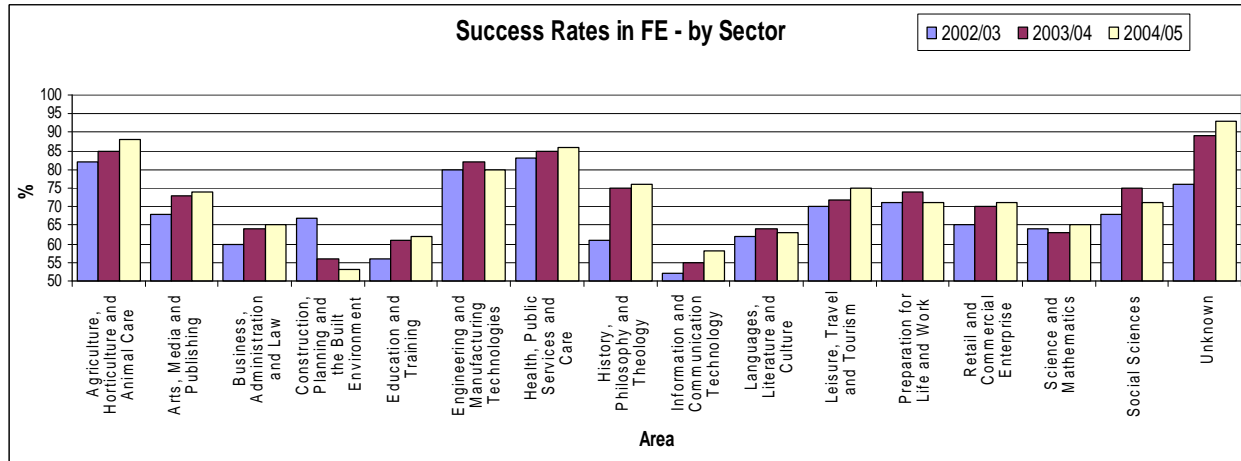
	Success rates in FE by Level 2, LLDD and BME					
	Full Level 2		LLDD		BME	
	Region	National	Region	National	Region	National
2002/03	47	51	68	67	65	62
2003/04	53	56	73	71	71	66
2004/05	58	61	73	73	72	70

Work Based learning full framework completions and E2E positive destinations



	WBL-Full Framework Achievement (All Ages) and E2E-Positive Destinations			
	Full Framework Achievement (WBL)		Positive Destinations (E2E)	
	Region	National	Region	National
2003/04	31	32	40	35
2004/05	40	40	47	44
2005/06	54	51	39	45

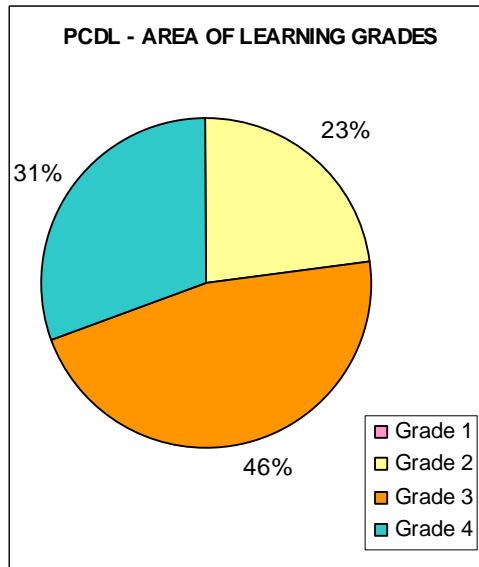
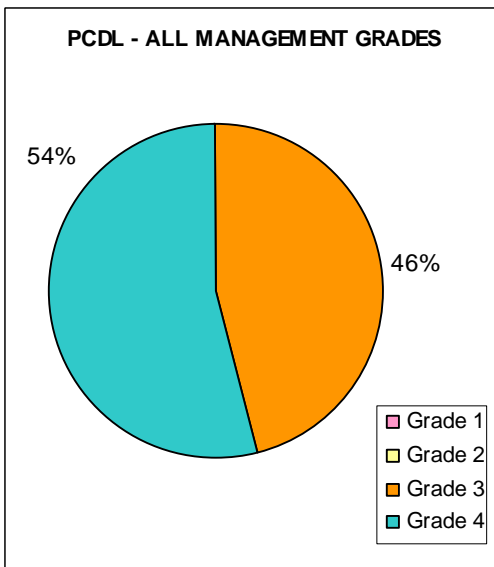
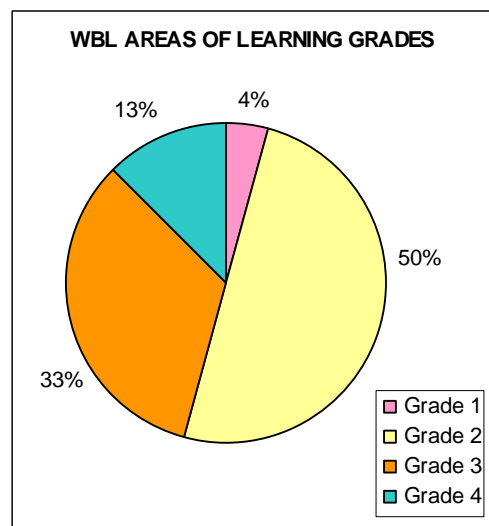
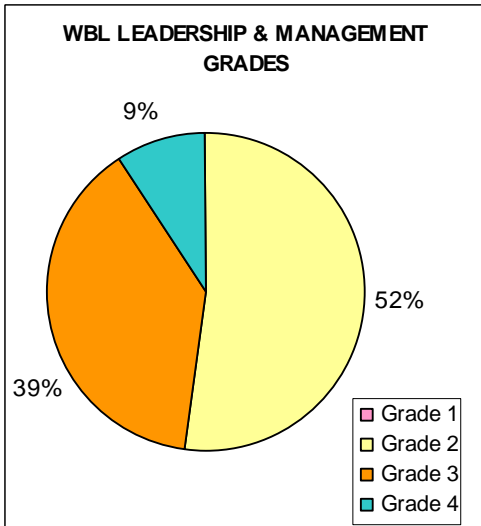
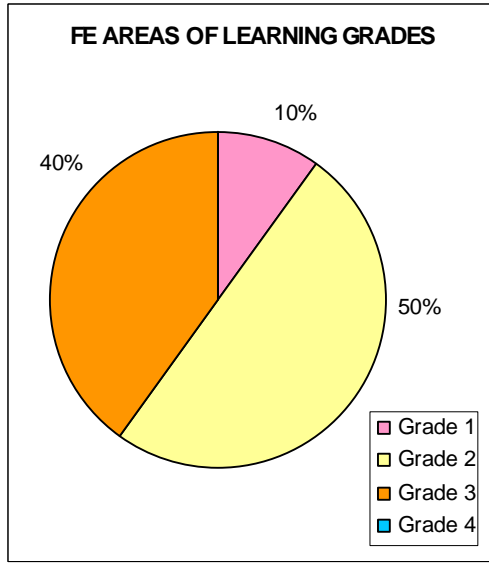
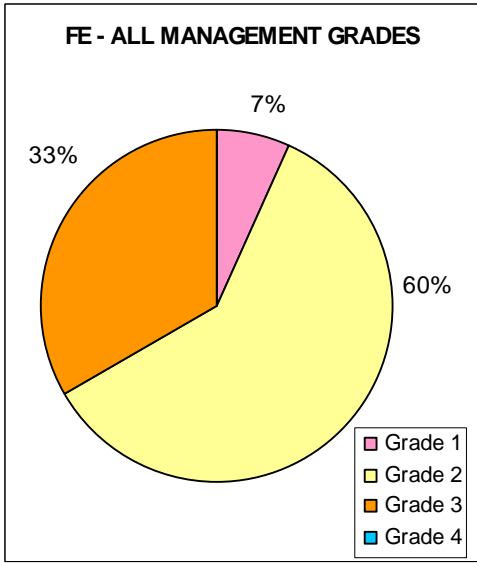
Sectors - FE success rates



	Success rates in FE		sectors					
	Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care	Arts, Media and Publishing	Business, Administration and Law	Construction Planning and the Built Environment	Education and Training	Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies	Health, Public Services and Care	History, Philosophy and Theology
2002/03	82	68	60	67	56	80	83	61
2003/04	85	73	64	56	61	82	85	75
2004/05	88	74	65	53	62	80	86	76

	Information and Communication Technology	Languages Literature and Culture	Leisure, Travel and Tourism	Preparation for Life and Work	Retail and Commercial Enterprise	Science and Mathematics	Social Sciences	Unknown
2002/03	52	62	70	71	65	64	68	76
2003/04	55	64	72	74	70	63	75	89
2004/05	58	63	75	71	71	65	71	93

APPENDIX III – INSPECTIONS SEPT 2005 TO AUGUST 2006



Regional Quality Improvement Partnership (RQIP) – Members

Learning and Skills Council (LSC) for the East Midlands represented by:	Verity Bullough	
Quality Improvement Agency (QIA) represented by:	Steve Sawbridge /Jennie Burnett	
OFSTED represented by:	Christine Langton	
Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) represented by:	Garth Clucas	
Further Education Colleges represented by:	Jennie Gardiner John Allen Martin Slattery	(EMFEC) (Lincoln College) (Bilborough College)
Independent Specialist Colleges represented by:	Mike Syms	(Portland College)
Work Based Learning providers represented by:	Chris Payne Adrian Holmes Carole Carson	(NTN for EMSA) (Sheffield Trainers Ltd) (Carter & Carter)
Government Office for the East Midlands (GOEM) represented by:	Steve Geary	
Schools represented by:	Theresa Roach	(Dronfield School)
Life Long Learning (UK) (LLUK) represented by:	Aidan Jackson	
Voluntary & Community Sector represented by:	Don Hayes	(enable)
Adult Community Colleges represented by:	Lesley Harry	(Derbyshire County Council)

Regional Quality Improvement Partnership Sub-group for producing the Strategy - Members

Learning and Skills Council	Francis Lawlor Lorna Freakley
Quality Improvement Agency	Steve Sawbridge
Life Long Learning (UK)	Aidan Jackson
Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) (Regional Support Centre (East Midlands))	Chris Hill
EMFEC	Alan Shaw

**East Midlands Regional Quality Strategy 2007/2010
Implementation Schedule**

Aim	Objective	Target	By When	How	Support
To raise the quality of provision to excellent	To promote and support the sharing of best practice through peer benchmarking	Increase the number of beacon status (or equivalent), FE colleges from 3 to 6 and for WBL providers from 1 to 6	2009/10	Providers to share good practice and develop a culture of continual quality improvement.	The Partnership will identify a wide range of activities and projects using the support mechanisms available through QIA to develop providers, encourage cross-provider and cross-area activities, including the promotion and development of Peer Challenge activities for all providers
	To support colleges and providers to develop their capacity for self improvement and self assessment	Improve Grade 1 and 2 provision by 10% within the CIF with no grade 4 provision. 10% of grades to be grade 1 and 50% of the grades to be grade 2	2009/10	The Partnership will promote the on-going development of peer reviews to support self assessment. Use performance data, findings of inspection, Ofsted Annual Assessment Visits (AAVs) and ALI monitoring reports to assess the degree to which a provider's self-assessment provides an accurate reflection of its performance, in quality and the mix and balance of provision in relation to needs and priorities.	Where self-assessment does not prove to be rigorous or reliable appropriate support will be established to manage the risks to delivery of the plan. Where provision is weak or presents a high risk to the quality of learning the LSC will work jointly with the QIA and the provider to identify appropriate support and intervention (where improvement is achievable and the cost of support is justified).
To raise the quality of provision to excellent	To support colleges and providers to develop their capacity for self improvement and self assessment	Improve Grade 1 and 2 provision by 10% within the CIF with no grade 4 provision. 10% of grades to be grade 1 50% of the grades to be grade 2		Where providers are able to demonstrate, through self-assessment, effective management of the risks to outstanding or good quality, a less intensive approach to the Annual Planning Review will be adopted.	All support mechanisms will be developed recognising that the principal responsibility for quality improvement rests with the provider.

East Midlands Regional Quality Strategy 2007/2010 Implementation Schedule

Aim	Objective	Target	By When	How	Support
	To increase the proportion of provision that is good or excellent and to eliminate inadequate provision	No provision to be at or below national floor targets or the minimum performance levels by 2008/09	2008/09	Strategically invest in provision that is satisfactory or better and that contributes to local and regional targets and priorities.	Identify providers who could achieve Beacon status by 2010 and, in support of quality improvement, discuss strategies with them for success
		all providers awarded grade 4 to achieve at least grade 3s at re-inspection		Assess the risk to the quality of the provision and funding then set targets for improvement, informed by national quality	Support will vary for each individual provider depending on their needs.
	To ensure providers are responsive to the needs of employers and learners	Increase Apprenticeship framework achievements for each provider by 5% and so contribute to a regional achievement of 59% by 2008/09	2008/09	Support providers to achieve recognised quality assurance measures – especially for employer responsiveness	A principal focus of support will be in sharing aspects of best practice from both within and outside the sector.
		Increase positive progressions for the region from E2E to at least match the national average. Each provider to improve progression by a minimum of 5%	2008/09	Determine benchmarks and review progress through the annual business cycle	Discussions in collaboration with the QIA of options for support and intervention from Support for Success and the Improvement Advisory Service.
		All providers to reach the new standard of employer responsiveness (or equivalent)	2010	The region has taken a lead in developing the role of peer review in the validation of self assessment and as a quality improvement process. The Partnership supports and encourages peer review within the self assessment framework.	Identify range of activities and projects using the support mechanisms available, encourage cross-provider and cross-area activities for all providers.

**East Midlands Regional Quality Strategy 2007/2010
Implementation Schedule**

Aim	Objective	Target	By When	How	Support
Improve learner success at all Levels	To increase the proportion of provision that is good or excellent and to eliminate inadequate provision	Improve FE learner success rates in construction to at least the regional average	2008/09	Withdraw from funding poor provision	The Partnership will support specific types of provision where inspections and overall performance give cause for concern
		Increase overall FE success rates by 2% per annum to 82%. Within this success rate 16-18 learners should achieve at least 78%	2010	Determine benchmarks and review progress through the annual business cycle	