



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



Moray College
12 February 2010

The external review process

HM Inspectors undertake an independent review of the quality of provision in Scotland's colleges on behalf of the Scottish Further and Higher Education Funding Council (SFC) under a service level agreement between the council and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE). Review teams include HM Inspectors, associate assessors and a student team member.

The review took place in accordance with the protocol on quality assurance of UHI Millennium Institute (UHIMI) and the SFC-funded colleges which are academic partners of UHIMI (March 2009). Under this protocol, which was agreed by SFC, HMIE and the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA), the review focused solely on Further Education (FE) provision.

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%

This report is Crown Copyright.

You may re-use this publication (not including agency logos) free of charge in any format for research, private study or internal circulation within an organisation. You must re-use it accurately and not use it in a misleading context. The material must be acknowledged as Crown Copyright and you must give the title of the source document/publication.

For any other use of this material please apply for a Click-Use Licence for core material at: www.hmsso.gov.uk/copyright/licences/click-use-home.htm

or by writing to: HMSO Licensing, St Clements House, 2-16 Colegate, Norwich, NR3 1BQ

Fax: 01603 723000

E-mail: hmsolicensing@cabinet-office.x.gsi.gov.uk

Contents	Page
1. Introduction	1
The college and its context	1
The external review	2
2. Confidence statements	3
3. Summary	4
Strengths	4
Main points for action	4
4. How well are learners progressing and achieving relevant, high quality outcomes?	5
5. How effective are the college's learning and teaching processes?	7
6. How well are learners engaged in enhancing their own learning and the work and life of the college?	10
7. How well is the college led and how well is it enhancing the quality of its services for learners and other stakeholders?	12
8. Signposting excellent and sector-leading and innovative practice	15
9. What happens next?	18
10. How can you contact us?	19
Appendices	
Glossary of terms	20
The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework	21

1 Introduction

The college and its context

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

The college has its origins in Elgin Technical College, which was founded in 1971 and which changed its name to Moray College following incorporation in 1993. The college's catchment area has a population of approximately 90,000. Elgin is the largest town in Moray, with approximately 22,000 residents, and occupies a central position in a network of smaller market towns, including Lossiemouth, Buckie, Keith and Forres. All of these towns are within close proximity to Elgin.

The local economy, although diverse, relies heavily on several food production companies and the public sector for a large proportion of local employment. For example, there are two large Royal Air Force (RAF) bases nearby. The public agencies with which the college works in partnership, have jointly published a strategy to achieve greater diversification in the economy, known locally as *Moray 2020*.

The college's contracted level of activity from the SFC for non-advanced programmes in session 2009/10 is 26,437 weighted SUMs (WSUM). The college enrolled approximately 8,700 students in session 2008/09, the highest level recorded in the college's history. Further Education enrolments grew by 18.5% during this session, mainly because of a significant expansion in part-time activity, particularly in school pupil enrolments.

During the review, unemployment rates in Moray were generally well below the Scottish average and had declined in recent months, following a steep increase earlier in 2009. Some large employers report skills shortages.

The college offers a wide range of programmes in a number of campuses, spread across the local area. The college's main campus is in central Elgin, as well as a Technology Centre where most of the construction and engineering activities take place. The college's horticulture programmes operate mainly from the *Biblical Garden* in Elgin, which occupies a site adjacent to Elgin's historic cathedral. The college also has Learning Centres in Buckie, Nairn, Forres and Keith, and a Vocational Centre in Forres. An Employability Centre run by the college operates out of Aberdeen, to which clients are referred from *Jobcentre Plus* under the *New Deal for Disabled People* programme.

The college is working with its *Moray Community Planning* partners to deliver a *Moray Life Sciences Centre*. The college is a significant member of the *Moray Community Planning Partnership* and a signatory to the *Moray Single Outcome Agreement*. These activities include membership of groups such as the *Moray Lifelong Learning Forum*, the *Moray English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Strategy Group*, the *Moray School-College Strategy Group* and the *Moray Adult Literacies Partnership*. The college has recently agreed to take over the responsibility for Moray Council's Adult Learning classes, with effect from January 2010.

The college employs approximately 430 staff. Its revenue budget is £12.6 million for 2009/10, of which 52% is accounted for by grant-in-aid from SFC for FE programmes.

The external review

The external review by HMIE took place during the week beginning 26 October 2009.

We examined learning and teaching and other important activities that impact on the quality of the learner experience. We evaluated these against the three key principles of *high quality learning, learner engagement* and *quality culture*, using the 17 reference quality indicators outlined in *External quality arrangements for Scotland's colleges, September 2008*. We used information from previous visits to the college to decide the scope of the review.

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

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

2. Confidence statements

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

HMIE is confident that:

- **learners are progressing well and achieving relevant, high quality outcomes;**
- **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 good progress against the aims in the strategic and operational plans for 2008/11.
- The college has well-embedded strategic and operational planning processes, and works well with partners and stakeholders to achieve national and local priorities.
- The college works effectively with a wide selection of partner organisations to provide a good choice of programmes, with appropriate access and levels, which meet the needs of a diverse range of learners well.
- Retention rates for FE learners are high and have been maintained at these levels for a number of years.
- An extensive range of programmes for school pupils meets their needs well.
- In almost all classes, learners are able to discuss clearly and confidently their learning styles with teaching staff.
- Many learners participate in volunteering, fund-raising, community and employment-related projects.
- In many instances, learners are involved in planning and evaluating a range of learning activities which helps them to be more effective in their studies and influences their future learning activities.
- The college provides learners with appropriate access to resources and realistic working environments, which develop their skills and knowledge well.
- Almost all learners are well motivated, participate actively in a wide range of learning activities and enjoy very positive relationships with staff.
- Most teaching staff display good levels of vocational experience and professional ability to support learners and enhance the learning experience.
- The college has extensive learner representation on course committees and important cross-college committees, which lead to improvements for learners.
- The college has robust quality assurance procedures in place and has developed a strong quality culture in which staff take responsibility to ensure learners have a successful learning experience.

Main points for action:

- The college should ensure it analyses retention and attainment rates for learners by race, disability and gender at programme level to assess whether these factors impact on learner success, and increase the pace in developing curricular materials which promote positive attitudes to cultural diversity.
- The college should ensure that the core skill of communication is contextualised within programmes and that learners are encouraged to extend their core skills levels in communication.
- The college should ensure that programme self-evaluation reports are more evaluative and contain actions which are specific and measurable, and which can be reviewed against progress.

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 is making good progress against the five strategic aims and 24 strategic objectives set out in the 2008/11 strategic plan. The college is meeting national and local priority targets by working closely with a range of partner organisations to ensure provision meets the needs of stakeholders and learners. Its mission and strategic aims are well understood by community partners, who acknowledge the innovation displayed by the college and its prompt response to identified needs.

The college's involvement in the *Moray Single Outcome Agreement* is led well by the principal, with the college as an active partner contributing to the *Welfare and Fairer* and *Smarter* strands of the Agreement. This has enabled the college to meet its strategic objective to '*deliver on those elements of the Moray Single Outcome Agreement for which the college is identified as the lead partner by the Community Planning Partnership*'.

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

Retention rates for FE learners are high and have been maintained at these levels for a number of years. Early student retention rates for part-time FE learners are particularly high and those for full-time learners have further improved over time. Most learners successfully progress to further study or employment.

Attainment rates for FE learners are good overall, sitting at sector average values, although the rates have fallen slightly over the last few years. There are a few curriculum areas where attainment is low. However, the college is aware of these areas and has introduced additional measures to support learner success.

How well does the college fulfil its statutory duties?

The college has produced equalities schemes and annual reports for the three statutory equality duties. It has begun to review the impact of its policies on equality and diversity and has a schedule for review and accompanying action plans. However, the college has not fully analysed the retention and attainment rates for learners by race, disability and gender at programme level and is unable to assess whether these factors impact on learner success.

The college has good arrangements in place to meet the statutory requirements in child protection and has addressed the protection of vulnerable adults in anticipation of the 2010 changes in legislation.

The college holds a successful *Diversity Day* focused on raising awareness among learners and staff of equalities and diversity issues. Through participation in a range of

events involving external speakers and workshops, the college promotes equal opportunities and cultural diversity.

How accessible, flexible and inclusive are college programmes and services?

The college has a strong commitment to meeting the learning needs of individuals and the local communities which it serves. Successful collaborative work between the college and local partners targets suitable programmes at disadvantaged groups. An extensive schools programme ensures that the range of qualifications and progression routes match the needs and abilities of pupils. To help support these aims, college staff attend parents' evenings and programme choice meetings in local schools.

Effective arrangements are in place to support learners. *Student Advisors* work closely with learner services to identify learner needs once they have started on programmes and ensure prompt referral and response. Staff have adapted methodologies to meet the needs of learners with disabilities and ESOL learners, supporting them to be successful in their learning. In a number of curriculum areas, learners are able to access theory classes online, allowing flexible attendance patterns.

How well do programmes and services meet learner needs?

The college offers a wide range of programmes which meet the needs of learners and the community well. Learners access programmes at suitable points and at appropriate levels. Many programmes provide suitable exit points into employment, as well as providing a good foundation for progression to further study. For example, the college's *Skills for Work* programmes are particularly effective in assisting learners to make an easy transition from school to college.

The college has made good progress in developing materials for the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). However, in a few curriculum areas, learners are unable to access additional materials to extend learning or support preparation for assessment.

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

Most learners are making good progress and gaining useful skills which support them to enter employment or progress to further study. The majority of learners who complete their programmes gain certificated awards. However, the college does not give all learners the opportunity to develop or extend their entry level core skill *communication* awards to higher levels as they progress through their programme.

Many learners participate in volunteering, fund-raising, community and employment-related projects, which develop essential skills and promote wider achievement. A number of learners gain part-time employment as a result of their work placement.

Many learners take part in local and national skills competitions and more than a few gain success. A few learners are using learning from the college as evidence towards the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. Some learners, such as those on beauty therapy programmes, gain additional work-related certificates which improve their employment opportunities.

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

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

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

The college offers a wide range of programmes which meet the needs of a diverse range of learners. These learners include those who require additional support for learning, and those whose first language is not English. Learners with additional support needs receive a range of effective, practical support measures to assist learning activities. The college also provides a range of successful school-college partnership programmes for a significant and growing number of pupils.

However, only a few curriculum areas promote equality and diversity effectively through consideration of cultural differences within programmes. The college does not systematically review curriculum material to ensure a lack of cultural bias and the promotion of equality and diversity.

How well do learners learn?

Almost all learners are well motivated and conscientious in class. They are confident about tasks and participate well in a range of activities. Most learners engage and work very well in groups and independently. They produce high quality work, with increasing levels of autonomy, as their skills develop.

Most learners enhance their learning by selecting appropriate learning activities to suit their vocational and personal interests. In some programmes, learners with different levels of knowledge and skills are integrated for practical work. This helps learners who are new to the college, or those who require extra support, to benefit from more experienced learners. This peer mentoring works very well, particularly in construction and hospitality programmes.

Almost all learners use constructive feedback well to improve their skills and build their confidence levels. Most learners use information and communications technology (ICT) resources effectively, in particular the VLE, to develop independent learning skills and to consolidate their learning and revise for assessments.

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

Most teaching staff use a varied range of teaching approaches effectively to motivate and interest learners. In most cases, staff make good use of learners' personal development plans to identify preferred learning styles and match them to learning activities. Teaching staff use groupwork to good effect and provide individual attention as needed. This approach enhances the learning experience.

Most teaching staff use questioning effectively to check learner understanding, and praise to increase learner confidence and motivation. Staff use their vocational experience well to make lessons interesting, by using examples from industry to contextualise learning activities and make the learning experience more relevant.

Teaching staff use a good range of resources, including practical work environments, to help learners develop employability skills. Most use ICT effectively, including electronic resources on the VLE, to support learning and encourage learners to work at their own pace.

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

Very positive relationships between learners and staff create a purposeful and supportive learning environment. Almost all learners have the opportunity to discuss the learning and teaching methods used in class. Learner questionnaires are also used regularly for learners to feedback on the quality of teaching and suggest future improvements.

Most staff plan lessons well and communicate outcomes and objectives to learners effectively. Staff use suitable extension exercises to ensure a sufficient pace of learning. Practical areas are well equipped to enable learners to learn independently and be actively engaged in practical work.

However, there is an inconsistent approach to the contextualisation of the core skill of communication across the college. In more than a few cases, staff delivering communication units do not use examples which relate to learners' area of study. The college has recognised this and has introduced an essential skills audit for every FE programme. An *Essential Skills Grid* is used to identify and promote contextualisation of core skills within individual units of study.

How well is assessment used to promote effective learning?

Most staff provide regular and timely feedback on assessments, which supports learners in reflection on their performance. The college makes appropriate arrangements for learners with additional support requirements.

Learners use assessment well to build their confidence and to test their knowledge and skills. Assessments are scheduled effectively and scheduled well to consolidate their learning. Several teaching departments use peer assessment well to help learners focus on the requirements of assessment.

However in a few instances, learners had received insufficient feedback on their performance, which diminished their learning experience and restricted their opportunities to develop their knowledge and skills.

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

Learners are very satisfied with the information they receive during induction and on-course guidance sessions, as well as their contact with *Student Advisors*. Learners make good use of *Personal Development Planning* (PDP) sessions with *Student Advisors* to identify appropriate learning styles and develop relevant employability skills. This helps them to set appropriate targets and goals and reflect on their progress.

Learners also receive helpful and effective support from *Learning Resource Centre* (LRC) staff, who ensure that learners enhance their knowledge by using the LRC facilities effectively. School pupils attending the college are given effective pre-course

information and are fully informed before applying for programmes, which leads to high rates of retention.

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

As part of its quality procedures, the college has in place robust systems to evaluate attainment and retention. Almost all staff contribute effectively to the college's internal review arrangements and analyse their programmes well.

Teaching staff take good account of Performance Indicators (PIs), sector norms, and trends over time to evaluate learner retention and attainment. These evaluations are well supported by senior managers. Curriculum areas with low trends are reviewed systematically to identify programmes which fall below thresholds for retention and attainment, and actions to ensure improvement are proposed by review teams. Peer review of Directorate programme reports by staff from other Directorates has been introduced to provide effective support to the programme evaluation process.

Learners are involved fully in internal review procedures which helps to ensure that they contribute well to decision making within the college. Teaching staff and learners regularly review and update the college portfolio of programmes to benefit learners. As a result, recent improvements include changes to the content of programmes, delivery methods and approaches to assessment.

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 are learners engaged in enhancing their own learning?

In almost all classes, learners are able to discuss clearly and confidently their learning styles with teaching staff. Many learners are involved in planning and evaluating a range of learning activities, which helps them to be more effective in their studies, and influences their future learning activities. A wide variety of methods is used to gather learner feedback to plan subsequent lessons in line with the college's *student communication and engagement strategy*. For example, in one department, learners are tested on-line by their *Student Advisor* on their individual learning styles, and these results are used to match the most appropriate learning style to their next set of programme activities.

Personal Development Planning is used widely throughout the college to promote appropriate goal setting and learner engagement. This process is supported by specially devised activities which develop employability and citizenship skills. Many learners enhance their learning by preparing for and competing in a wide range of skills competitions at local, national and international levels.

An extensive class representative system helps learners to influence and improve programme design and delivery. These include *Huddle Groups* in which class representatives meet with senior Directorate staff to discuss how to improve the learner experience. Learners also engaged effectively in a consultation on the design of the LRC. This engagement has led to changes in the layout of the LRC that better suit the range of learners and their learning styles by providing a variety of spaces for group and individual study. These changes include establishing a *Discussion Room* to help learners use LRC facilities while working on group activities, without disrupting the learning experience for other learners.

How well are learners engaged in enhancing the work and life of the college?

Learners are represented well on a wide range of college committees and course teams, which influence many aspects of college life. The student president participates in all Board of Management planning events, including the annual strategic planning activity with external stakeholders. The *Students' Association* has a positive relationship with the senior management team, which helps class representatives to express learners' views effectively. For example, the *Student Affairs Committee*, has a rotating chair between the principal and the student president, and consists mostly of student members, but also has three Board of Management members present. As a result of their engagement on this committee, learners propose changes which are taken forward by the college management team to improve the learner experience.

Through extensive promotion of the class representative system and the significant levels of *Student Participation in Quality Scotland (sparqs)* training that has taken place, many class representatives are able to participate in early engagement focus

groups, allowing the college to respond timeously to the issues raised. For example, learners have organised a peer survey on the service and food in the refectory. As a result of this, the menu has changed, now providing a range of healthier options.

Learners have good opportunities to influence the planning of their programmes through their involvement in *Further Education Review* teams, which consider programmes which fall below specific PI thresholds. These reviews identify problems and offer solutions where improvements are required.

Learners on several programmes, including those with additional support needs, work well with college staff to organise and deliver the successful annual *Moray Science Festival*. This is popular with many local school children and the general public. Small groups of learners plan, devise and test short, 30-minute practical sessions, after agreeing the topics with the local primary schools. This activity promotes the college and its reputation. Learners develop important skills in communication, teamwork and problem solving. In addition, many improve their self-confidence and self-esteem

Class representatives work in partnership with staff from the *Student Information and Advice Centre (SIAC)* to plan and deliver events such as *Diversity Day* which has raised awareness of equality issues with learners. As a result of the positive feedback from learners and stakeholders, the college now holds this event annually.

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 the college is led well and is enhancing the quality of its services for learners and other stakeholders.

The college has well-embedded and effective planning processes, in which staff at all levels and Board of Management members are engaged. The annual strategic planning day involving the Board of Management, the principal's management group and a number of external stakeholders and partner organisations, is effective in setting the college vision and its future strategic priorities.

There are strong links between the aims and objectives in the college's strategic and operational plans. Managers and staff teams contribute to setting operational targets which helps them to take ownership and responsibility of these targets within defined timescales. Most operational targets relate well to college aims, however, more than a few are not sufficiently specific or measurable to help the college review success or progress.

The senior management team communicates the aims and objectives of the college very clearly and staff understand their role in helping to achieve them. Staff are highly committed to college initiatives in learning and teaching. The Board of Management endorses strongly the strategic aim of providing learning and teaching of the highest quality, including plans to introduce a peer observation system.

The college plays a key role in helping partner organisations meet national and local priority targets. For example, the college is a signatory to the local authority *Single Outcome Agreement* and the principal and other members of the senior management team act as lead officers in a number of its educational dimensions.

The college has worked well in partnership with local stakeholders to respond to and meet the needs of the local community. The principal, supported by an enthusiastic management team and Board of Management, provides strong strategic direction for the college and a leadership style through which staff feel empowered to make improvements to the learner experience.

Managers in the college have been very proactive in setting clear strategies for curriculum development, working together with staff teams to achieve change. The college has developed a learning and teaching strategy to support improvements and develop alternative approaches to learning and teaching. The introduction of the peer observation system will be part of the strategy to enhance the learning and teaching process.

The principal and senior management team make good use of the views of employers, local partner organisations, college staff and learner views to shape the content and delivery of programmes. Most teaching teams are well motivated and involved fully in developing and delivering programmes that are well matched to the needs of local industries and individual learners.

Staff are well informed of progress on college developments in learning and teaching through a range of college initiatives, including weekly newsletters from the principal, the college intranet, staff development sessions and *Welcome Back* sessions which focus on key college initiatives and policies.

The college has invested significantly in staff development activities and teaching staff are supported well to improve learning and teaching through appropriate initial training and ongoing Continuing Professional Development (CPD).

Teamworking in service areas is highly effective. Managers empower and encourage their teams to deliver a range of services which help learners have a fulfilling college experience. Service area managers and their staff work effectively with teaching staff to ensure that learners' needs are identified early and support is provided as required. Staff in support services are engaged in improving the services they offer learners and this is reflected in the operational plans and self-evaluation reports they produce.

The *PDP* programme is enhanced with input from the *SIAC* team. This ensures that all learners enhance employability skills, better understand equality issues and develop the four capacities in *Curriculum for Excellence*.

The college has appointed a schools' coordinator to work with the local authority schools. She ensures the increasing number of school pupils attending college receive effective support and guidance.

The college has developed a strong quality culture in which staff take responsibility to ensure learners have a positive and successful learning experience. Extensive and well-understood quality procedures and arrangements are in place, and roles and responsibilities for quality enhancement are clearly defined. Staff understand their role in the review and evaluation of their activities and the implementation of college procedures. The college has robust arrangements for evaluating retention and attainment trends over time through monitoring and reviewing programmes which fall below college-defined criteria. These mechanisms ensure that improvements take place over time.

Staff are responsive to concerns raised by learners and act speedily to make improvements. They use a wide range of evidence from learners to help in their self-evaluation process, including *Huddle Groups*, online unit and programme surveys, focus groups and course team meetings.

Teaching and support staff contribute effectively to the college's self-evaluation activities and demonstrate improvements for learners as a result of their engagement. However, staff are not sufficiently evaluative in reporting their discussions from self-evaluation procedures. Text from most reports is mainly descriptive and does not set appropriately specific or measurable action points.

Staff are committed to improving the learning experience. The summary section from learning and teaching plans presents reflections by staff on their learning and teaching approaches. These are collated and used to disseminate good practice and prepare ongoing CPD events. The college will introduce a peer observation process as part of the *Learning and Teaching strategy* and staff are keen to see these developments become embedded into the college culture.

Learners are confident that the college, through the class representative system, addresses effectively issues raised by them and their representatives. They also have a realistic understanding that not all requests are possible due to limitations related to funding and other external influences.

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 Sector-leading and innovative practice in creating and developing the Moray Science Festival

Learners on science programmes organise and deliver an annual science festival, which attracts around 2,000 primary school pupils and 3,500 members of the general public, over a five-day period. Small groups of learners devise short, 30-minute workshops which cover a theme for the year, such as energy and food. The annual topics are agreed through discussion with the local primary schools, often relating to curriculum priorities. The emphasis for the festival is on providing hands-on practical activities.

The science learners devise their workshops, design and test the practical activities and run health and safety checks. Each day, they run their workshops with groups of 20 school pupils. Each workshop may be repeated six or eight times daily. Learners develop important skills in communication, teamwork and problem solving. In addition, many improve their self-confidence and self-esteem. Learners from other areas in the college also participate during the festival. For example, beauty therapy learners offer mini-treatments, Hairdressing learners demonstrate different techniques and learners from the *Skills for Life* programme act as escorts for the primary pupils around the college.

The festival is supported by a number of sponsors including, the Scottish Government, the Royal Society of Chemistry and Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) Moray.

8.2 Sector-leading and innovative practice in the college acting as lead agent in the educational dimensions of the Moray Single Outcome Agreement.

The college is a signatory to the *Moray Single Outcome Agreement* for both 2008/09 and 2009/10, and was integral in the discussions that led to the development of the Single Outcome Agreement for 2009/10. The shared values of the partnership are reflected in both the college Strategic and Operational plans.

The agreement makes a number of references to the role of the college and how it will contribute at the local level. The college leads on a number of local outcomes for the *Moray Single Outcome Agreement* and these are reviewed and monitored through the *Moray Lifelong Learning Forum*, which is chaired by the college principal.

Senior college staff are members of several strategic groups and the college leads the *Adult Education National Outcome* through the Smarter Strategic Group. College staff also have key roles in *Community Planning Partnership* groups such as *Moray ESOL Strategy Group*, *Moray School-College Strategy Group* and the *Moray Adult Literacies Partnership*. The college has also recently agreed to take over the responsibility for the Moray Council's adult learning classes with effect from January 2010.

The work of the *Moray ESOL Strategy* Group has resulted in a significant increase in ESOL activity across Moray and particularly to those migrants who were previously difficult to reach. Leading the different aspects of the Single Outcome Agreement, the college has been effective in supporting the *More Choices More Chances* agenda with additional opportunities being offered to learners.

8.3 Excellent practice in student finance with the *YouTube* resource on completing a finance application form

During self-evaluation procedures, staff in the student finance department reflected on how they could use ICT to improve their services.

The learners' early experience survey showed that the majority of learners found the bursary application form complicated to use. In many cases, this form was incorrectly completed which added time to processing the application and ultimately delayed payment for the learner. A focus group of class representatives commented on bursary application forms from other colleges. The student finance department considered the findings from the focus group and produced a new application form which learners believed would improve the application process. The form was in larger print and was accompanied by a set of instructions on how to complete it. The team decided to produce a DVD which showed the college student finance officer explaining how to complete the form. In doing this, the team placed a link on the college internet site to *YouTube* in which learners could watch a five minute presentation on completing the application form. The team was able to help a diverse range of learners, who were experienced in using the college VLE and other electronic media, to use the same types of approaches to access college support services.

In the current year, over 90 users of the film have registered on the *YouTube* website. Learners who find the bursary application form difficult to complete are able to utilise this resource to overcome potential barriers to enrolling on college programmes.

8.4 Excellent practice in *Prepare 2 Care*

The college's strategic aim '*A college that is responsive to the lifelong learning needs of the students and communities that it serves*' is part of a focus by the college to reach the most distanced and disadvantaged learners and progress them towards employability. These work preparation programmes have been developed in partnership with the Highland Employer Coalition, Jobcentre Plus, Skills Development Scotland and local employers.

Jobcentre Plus, and other local partner agencies including the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations and Support Training, refer clients to the college. Funding providers identify particular disadvantaged groups whom they wish to support and these have included lone parents, customers with health conditions affecting their employability, and the long-term unemployed.

The *Prepare 2 Care* programme has been designed to meet the individual needs of learners as well as the basic skills and attributes required by employers. Programme times are agreed with learners to assist with child care arrangements and for those with health conditions.

Subjects within the programmes include the Elementary Food Hygiene Certificate, emergency first aid, communication, equality, dignity and respect, Jobseeking Skills and team building. Careers guidance is provided through a session on *Careers in Care* delivered by the Curriculum Leader and through all participants undertaking Adult Directions, an on-line analysis tool. Guest speakers and an industry visit are also arranged during the programme.

Learners participate in weekly fitness sessions in the college's fitness suite to prepare them for the physical demands of working in the care sector.

The *Prepare 2 Care* programme has been successfully delivered ten times. Of the 100 learners who have participated, 57 have secured employment, seven have become full-time students, ten have moved onto other programmes such as Training for Work. The remaining learners have either moved out of the area, are unable to participate for health reasons or are considering further options.

8.5 Excellent practice in maintaining the Biblical Gardens in Elgin

The college has located its horticultural programmes on the site of the Biblical Gardens in Elgin adjacent to the historic cathedral. The college has an agreement with the local council to pay a peppercorn rent to locate their provision here. In exchange for this facility, the college has agreed that horticultural learners and staff ensure the gardens are maintained to the highest standards throughout the year and continue to be an attraction for visitors to the area.

On site, the college has a portakabin classroom fully equipped with ICT facilities, polytunnels to grow plants and shrubs, and potting sheds. The college shares this area of the gardens with the local council's landscaping services department. They cooperate with each other by sharing resources and the college has learners from the council attending classes. Learners from SVQ programmes learn how to propagate plants and plan where to place them at appropriate locations throughout the gardens. They show visitors around the gardens and discuss plants and shrubs with them. Learners are very appreciative of having these facilities available for their use. The resources allow learners to practise their skills and knowledge within a highly realistic and industry-standard working environment.

9. What happens next?

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

Peter B Connelly
HM Inspector

10. How can you contact us?

If you would like a printed copy of this report

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 college external reviews

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.

Crown Copyright 2010
HM Inspectorate of Education

Appendix 1

Glossary of terms

BMCT	Business Management and Communications Team
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
FE	Further education
HIE	Highlands and Islands Enterprise
HMIE	HM Inspectorate of Education
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
LRC	Learning Resource Centre
PDP	Personal Development Planning
PI	Performance Indicator
RAF	Royal Air Force
SIAC	Student Information and Advice Centre
SCQF	Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework
SFC	Scottish Funding Council
sparqs	Student Participation in Quality Scotland
SVQ	Scottish Vocational Qualification
VLE	Virtual Learning Environment
WSUM	weighted student unit of measurement

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

Other learning may be credit rated and included in the framework provided it leads to a clear set of learning outcomes and has quality-assured learner assessment. All of Scotland's colleges were awarded SCQF Credit Rating powers in January 2007.