



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



**Perth College UHI
11 May 2012**

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 Education Scotland. Review teams include HM Inspectors, associate assessors and a student team member.

The review took place in accordance with the protocol on quality assurance (March 2009) of the then UHI Millennium Institute, now the University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI), and its partner colleges which are academic partners of UHI. 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%

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1. Introduction

The college and its context

In carrying out the external review of Perth College UHI, Education Scotland took the following college context fully into account.

Perth College UHI offers a range of full and part-time programmes to the community within Perth and Kinross and beyond. A large number of international learners attend the college. The college is an academic partner of the University of the Highlands and Islands which was granted University Title in February 2011. The main college campus is based in the west of Perth and includes recently-built student accommodation which opened in August 2010. There is also a nursery facility for staff, learners and commercial users. Several programmes are delivered in outreach learning centres and in secondary schools across the Perth and Kinross region. Full-time programmes range from Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) level 2 to 11. *Specialist Research Centres* for Interpretation Studies, Mountain Studies and Rural Childhood have been established within the college. The college's wholly-owned subsidiary, Air Service Training Engineering Ltd., is approved to deliver courses and examinations under the European Aviation Safety Agency Part 147 regulations. Learners come from a wide range of international locations to study on these programmes.

Perth and Kinross region has a varied economy, and includes the city of Perth, the town of Kinross, and Highland Perthshire. The area has a higher percentage of people in work than the national average but has also suffered from the current economic downturn. Employment continues to be dominated by tourism, the service sector and small businesses. The workforce in Perth and Kinross is generally better qualified than in Scotland as a whole, although the percentage of people with no qualifications is similar to the national average at 12%. Young people attending schools in Perth and Kinross are achieving higher levels of qualifications than across Scotland. The local area has the third highest level of inward migration in Scotland, mostly by people from the new EU countries. Senior staff members represent Perth College UHI on the Community Planning Partnership, the Chamber of Commerce and NHS Tayside.

Further Education (FE) programmes cover a wide range of subject areas, with a strong emphasis on care and engineering. FE programmes currently account for approximately 75% of provision. During academic year 2010/11, 5290 FE learners were enrolled on full-time, part-time, work-based or distance learning programmes. The college employs approximately 514 staff.

The college's revenue budget for 2010-11 is £19.6 million, of which 53% is accounted for by grant-in-aid from the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) for FE programmes.

The external review

The external review by Education Scotland took place during the week beginning 20 February 2012.

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

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

We found examples of excellence and sector-leading practice which we describe on pages 15-17 of this report.

2. Confidence statements

The following are holistic judgements made by Education Scotland on the basis of the external review activities which took place in February 2012. These judgements relate to the key principles of high quality learning, learner engagement and quality culture.

Education Scotland 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 achieved, or is making good progress against, most of its key strategic targets represented within its *Balanced Scorecard* indicators for 2010 to 2013.
- There has been significant improvement in overall student attainment rates within FE programmes which lead to a recognised qualification over the past three years, particularly over the last year.
- College programmes meet the needs of learners, the local community and employers well.
- The college provides a welcoming environment for learners from widely different backgrounds. Learners are treated fairly and with respect.
- In almost all classes, learners are well motivated in their learning and keen to acquire the skills that will lead to further study or employment.
- High levels of respect and encouragement between learners and staff create a positive and supportive climate for learning throughout the college.
- In many subject areas, learners take increasing responsibility for their learning and provide effective peer support for each other.
- The principal is supported very well by a senior management team and directors who work together to provide clear leadership for learning and effective management of college functions.
- Leadership of services to support learners is very effective, with learners experiencing well-coordinated support both prior to and throughout their college experience.
- All programme teams have a clear focus on securing improvement. They engage constructively in reviewing their programmes in order to identify what works well and what needs to change.
- There is a strong and effective quality culture across the college. Staff work well together and are responsive to the views of learners, which helps them to reflect constructively on the learning experience.

Main points for action:

- The college should further develop approaches to teaching which ensure consistently high quality learning for all learners.

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

Education Scotland is confident that learners are progressing well and achieving relevant, high quality outcomes.

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

The college has achieved, or is making good progress against, most of its key strategic targets represented within its *Balanced Scorecard* indicators for 2010 to 2013. Implementation of the *Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy* has successfully supported a range of approaches which have had a positive influence on levels of learner engagement, retention and attainment. Within the past year, there has been improvement in most performance indicators for FE learners, particularly in student attainment rates. Recently, the college has successfully improved its estate by building high-specification accommodation for learners on the campus.

The college has a positive impact on most aspects of its partnership work in education, the community and local industry sectors. Its programmes support economic development in the local area. It is particularly responsive to demand for workbased learning, and enjoys a high reputation for its work with employers.

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

Over the past three years, learners on FE programmes have generally performed well. While early retention and student retention rates remain on or above sector average values, there is a slight downturn in retention within part-time programmes.

Within the last three years, there has been significant improvement in overall student attainment rates for FE programmes which lead to a recognised qualification, particularly over the last year. Student attainment rates are now high, though there remain a few programmes where rates are low.

Most learners whose destinations are known progress to further learning or to employment. Most learners following Get Ready for Work and Training for Work programmes are on target to complete their programmes. However, the college recognises that more needs to be done to ensure that all learners on Modern Apprenticeship programmes achieve milestones within appropriate timescales.

How well does the college fulfil its statutory duties?

The college has undertaken extensive consultation with learners, staff and community groups to inform the future development of its Single Equalities Plan. Currently, publication of information in relation to disability, gender and race is up to date and clear. The college undertakes detailed analysis of patterns of learner retention and attainment in relation to age, gender, disability, and ethnicity. These are also analysed or commented on in most programme self-evaluation reports, with appropriate actions taken to address any relevant issues.

The college is on target in relation to implementation of its *Carbon Management Plan*. It is also employing a number of effective measures to monitor and reduce energy consumption. There is a comprehensive and effective safeguarding policy and procedure in place. This includes robust arrangements for liaison with external agencies and schools, for contractors operating within college premises and for work placements. Effective arrangements for ensuring the safety of learners in college accommodation are also in place.

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

The college offers a wide range of programmes which are available through part-time or distance study, are located in learning centres across the region or are offered within the workplace. This enables learners to access study in flexible ways that fit with their lives. The college also offers a range of school-college programmes, mostly on school premises. This has helped to cut down travel time for young people undertaking these programmes. It is currently working with Perth and Kinross Council to ensure that appropriate Skills for Work programmes continue to be offered for local young people, within the current economic climate. The college plans to continue to offer programmes for the senior phase of Curriculum for Excellence in the next academic session, including distance learning programmes at Higher level.

The college has effective arrangements to identify and provide additional support for learners. The *Social and Vocational Studies* (SVS) curriculum team provides effective, flexible, individualised programmes of learning which meet the needs of learners with additional support needs. In many instances, this involves close partnership working with key external agencies. The Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) is not used extensively within FE programmes, which reduces flexible access for learners.

How well do programmes and services meet learner needs?

College programmes meet the needs of learners, the local community and employers well. Almost all learners begin their studies at appropriate levels. Many programmes prepare learners well for employment as well as for further study. The college has revised its portfolio of FE programmes recently with the aim of aligning it better to local need. This has resulted in the withdrawal of a number of poorly performing programmes and the introduction of a suite of more appropriate access programmes. These help learners to develop good learning and employability skills, while trying out a range of vocational subjects.

The college has established the *Skills Development Framework—Skills for Life, Learning and Work*, which integrates essential skills, employability and sustainability effectively within programmes. The college has a positive, welcoming and inclusive ethos. It provides good support for the large number of international learners who attend the college, helping them to embrace Scottish culture and share their own cultural traditions. Almost all learners in the college express a high level of satisfaction both with their programmes and their overall college experience.

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

Almost all learners make good progress from previous levels of learning and develop appropriate levels of vocational skills, knowledge and understanding. Most learners who remain on programmes gain the associated qualifications. Many learners also attain additional qualifications and awards as part of their programmes, which helps them to enhance their skills portfolios and employment options. Most learners develop good understanding of employability and sustainability issues and develop the core skills of communication, numeracy and information and communications technology (ICT) to appropriate levels. Learners in all programmes demonstrate growing self-confidence and increased aspirations for their career development as their studies progress. Many learners also take up opportunities to enhance their learning by taking part in competitions, undertaking work experience, and attending visits by industry practitioners. Learners in FE programmes are increasingly participating in volunteering, fund-raising, community and employment-related projects which develop essential skills and promote wider achievement.

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

Education Scotland 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 provides a welcoming environment for learners from a wide range of backgrounds. Learners are treated fairly and with respect. International learners access a range of well-designed and well-delivered programmes which fulfil their needs and enable them to further their careers. The college communicates very clear messages in its public spaces about inclusion and zero tolerance of discrimination.

Most learning tasks and activities are appropriate for the levels of study involved. Many teaching staff work very well with local partner agencies and businesses to provide a range of additional activities and live projects which enhance the curriculum. Staff ensure that learners who require additional support have their needs evaluated swiftly. These learners have access to a wide range of appropriate resources, including assistive technologies. Curriculum teams review existing learning and teaching materials regularly to ensure they meet the requirements of equality and diversity. However, most teams do not identify or plan opportunities to promote equality and diversity within learning and teaching activities in a sufficiently systematic way.

How well do learners learn?

In almost all classes, learners are well motivated in their learning and keen to acquire the skills that will lead to further study or employment. Most learners develop good team-working skills through group activities. Many learners also benefit from peer support as they learn, which increases motivation and enjoyment. In more than a few classes, learners develop skills that allow them to think creatively and to solve issues that arise during tasks. In a few classes, learners contribute to the planning of lessons and occasionally they lead learning. Almost all learners produce work of a high standard, both in practical areas and in theoretical elements of their work.

Most learners use learning resources, materials and equipment competently, paying close attention to safe working practices in practical areas. Most learners work well independently by progressing through study material at their own pace, in many instances making good use of ICT.

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

Almost all teaching staff use professional knowledge and up-to-date industry expertise effectively to reinforce high standards. This makes most lessons interesting and relevant. However, teaching staff do not always use a sufficiently wide range of teaching approaches in their classes and occasionally learners become disengaged. In a few classes, staff offer flexible choices in teaching approaches, responding well to individual learner preferences and needs.

Most teaching staff use an appropriate range of questioning techniques that stimulate discussion and enquiry by learners, but a few miss opportunities to do this. Teaching

staff make effective use of groupwork in the majority of classes and make effective use of ICT frequently to enhance learning and teaching. Many are making increasingly effective use of social networking technologies to enhance communication with and amongst learners.

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

High levels of respect and encouragement between learners and staff create a positive and supportive climate for learning throughout the college. Most teaching staff plan lessons well which ensures that lesson objectives are clear. In most classes, learning activities are provided at the right level of pace and challenge and build well on learners' previous knowledge and skills. A recent strong drive to contextualise the core skills of communication and numeracy means that most are now relevant to the main subject area being studied. Where this happens, learners benefit from a realistic and helpful learning experience which helps them to prepare for employment. A few programmes now deliver core skills through team teaching within vocational subjects. This has had a positive impact on attainment and has been well received by learners. However, contextualised delivery of core skills does not yet take place across all programmes.

The views of learners are sometimes used to influence the planning of learning activities and topics of study within a class. However, outwith project-based activities, teaching staff do not involve learners systematically in negotiating and planning class activities.

How well is assessment used to promote effective learning?

Almost all teaching staff support and prepare learners well for assessment. They communicate schedules clearly, and build in sufficient time for practice assignments or papers. Many teaching staff have adjusted assessment methods and schedules in response to learner feedback. Staff in the majority of curriculum areas are developing integrated assessment approaches which reduce the assessment burden and link up areas of learning more clearly. Most teaching staff use ongoing assessment approaches well to check learners' understanding.

Almost all learners benefit from prompt and helpful feedback on assessments. This supports them well to reflect on their progress and further improve the standard of their work. In a few areas, learners make good use of technology in the form of film clips which supports peer or self-assessment well.

Learners with additional support needs, such as dyslexia, are able to undertake assessments with good levels of support. Staff plan these special assessment arrangements carefully in consultation with learners, which helps learner to undertake assessments with confidence.

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

Most learners receive helpful information about college programmes and support services prior to commencing their studies. Almost all learners experience a welcoming, well-planned induction with a strong focus on team-building.

The college has a clear, consistent and well-integrated approach to support and guidance for learners on full-time programmes. This has had a positive impact on learning. Helpful first-line support is provided to learners by *Student Advisors*-members of teaching staff who know the learners well and monitor their progress closely. They hold regular personal development planning interviews with all full-time learners which are used constructively to identify areas of difficulty. *Student Advisor Coordinators* also carry out an effective role in monitoring and reporting learner progress to programme teams using the *BRAG* (Blue, Red, Amber and Green) signalling process. This enables teaching staff to identify learners who are not making good progress and to take immediate action to support them. Recently-appointed *Student Link Workers* also provide helpful support for learners experiencing difficulties with attendance and attainment. The college is quick to identify those learners who need additional learning support and to provide it effectively through the work of *Student Services* team and *Study Skills Support* service within the *Learning Zone*.

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

All programme teams have a clear focus on securing improvement. They engage constructively in reviewing their programmes in order to identify what works well and what needs to change. Learner representatives contribute effectively to most programme team meetings and their views inform annual programme reviews. In some programmes, external partners and local employers also make valuable contributions to team planning.

Most programme teams carry out self-evaluation thoroughly and well. Reports have become increasingly rigorous and staff have benefited from effective support from the college's Quality Unit staff. Most self-evaluation reports include a detailed analysis of performance indicators and constructive analysis of learning and teaching against the college's *Take Five* indicators. In general, teaching staff demonstrate insight about what needs to change, including the adoption of different approaches to teaching.

A range of integrated approaches have improved monitoring and evaluation of practice across programmes. This includes much more rigorous tracking of attendance and learner performance. This has resulted in quicker identification of, and support for, learners in danger of dropping out.

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

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

How well do learners engage in enhancing their own learning?

The college has established learner engagement as a key theme within its Strategic Plan. The *Student Engagement Strategy*, launched in June 2011, reflects the strengthened focus on the relationship between positive learner engagement and effective learning. Learners contributed to the development of this strategy. There are clear links between this strategy and the *Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy*, with the benefits of a mutually respectful learning environment set out clearly within the two documents. Senior managers and the Board of Management are currently overseeing and monitoring a two-year implementation process of the *Student Engagement Strategy*. A key area of focus within the strategy relates to increasing the influence of learners on their learning experience. As a consequence, learners are becoming more involved in decision-making about their learning, and expressing more systematically their views about the services they receive. Staff with a specific remit for learner engagement support the work of the Student Association well through a number of useful liaison, promotion and administration duties. This is helping to raise the profile of learner engagement across the college.

Currently, almost all learners experience open and respectful interaction with teaching staff, particularly their *Student Advisors*. They find it easy to articulate their learning needs and to express their views within this positive culture. In turn, they receive high levels of personal support and help from staff. Many learners feel treated as equals by staff, which is valued especially by younger learners. This motivates them to do well.

In many subject areas, learners take increasing responsibility for their learning and provide effective peer support for each other. In several programmes, learners have influenced constructively the ways in which learning takes place. This has resulted in learners choosing topics for study or suggesting specific learning and teaching approaches. Many learners also take up opportunities to enhance their learning by taking part in competitions, undertaking work experience, and attending visits by industry practitioners.

Teaching staff regularly seek learners' views on learning and teaching and most programme teams respond constructively to learner feedback, which informs effective development of programmes. Almost all full-time FE programmes have class representatives, most of whom have undergone relevant training. Most class representatives attend programme team meetings regularly and are effective at conveying the views of their peers to staff. Learner feedback has resulted in improvements in several programmes. These include increased levels of group learning activities and improved access to computers outwith class time. A well-attended *Student Representative Council* meets regularly to share and discuss the views of learner representatives. This has resulted in improvements to college facilities.

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

The college has become more systematic than previously about gathering learners' views across the college through surveys and focus groups. This has improved learner participation. It has also recently established *Meet the Managers* sessions with the *Student Association Executive* and other learners which is already providing a useful forum for discussions about wider college life. Class representatives attend regular focus groups at which they suggest ways of enhancing their college experience. For example, they helped to develop a learner version of the *Take Five* learning and teaching principles. The college publicises its response to issues raised in these different meetings promptly, and details what has been done in response to learner views.

The college has an active and well-established Student Association, which comprises a president, an executive and a number of volunteers with specific areas of responsibility. The Student Association is located in dedicated premises, the Student Union, which also provides catering and social facilities. The president has a high profile across the college and is well-known by learners. He represents the learner voice on a number of college committees, including the Board of Management. However, the college recognises that more learners could benefit from greater understanding of the role of the Student Association and through increased participation in its activities. As a result, the college is actively encouraging more learners to visit the Student Union and become better acquainted with the work of the Student Association.

The college is also actively enhancing learner enhancement of college life through establishing more cross-campus communication and social activity. Student Association volunteers have helped to develop a range of electronic communication channels which is helping to keep learners well informed about college initiatives and social events. The number of learners participating in college or Student Association social activities has increased. This is leading to a much more enjoyable college experience for learners and is helping to create a sense of community amongst them. Many learners engage in activities which add value to their programmes and contribute well to the life and work of the college. These include competitions and volunteering within the local community.

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

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

The Board of Management sets a clear strategic direction for the college through well-considered planning processes that take good account of Scottish Government and SFC priorities. The college's ten-year vision, set in 2007, is supported by its current three-year strategic plan which sets out clear and appropriate aims with associated targets. These are linked to five key cross-college strategies which underpin the college's overarching purpose of providing the best possible educational experience for learners. This plan is supported by a *Balanced Scorecard* approach, which sets out clear and realistic targets with timescales for completion. The Board of Management maintains an effective strategic overview and is well-informed about the college's business through its standing committees. All curriculum and support teams produce very comprehensive annual operational plans linked to the strategic plan, which reflect each team's priority objectives and support delivery of its targets. Annual operational plans are cross-referenced to the *Balanced Scorecard*, with the identification of resources clearly informed by self-evaluation documents.

Since the principal took up office in July 2010, both he and senior college managers have set aside time to reflect and consult on college provision. They have identified several ways of aligning it more clearly with its central purpose of delivering high quality education. A number of well-conceived, interrelated initiatives have streamlined college structures, programmes and services. These include a significant revision of the further education curriculum portfolio and a recent organisational restructure from 12 to five curriculum sectors. This aims to provide suites of programmes which match key local economic sectors more clearly.

The college is a key contributor within Perth and Kinross Community Planning Partnership and associated sub-groups. However, the college recognises that more needs to be done to ensure that joint planning of provision with the local authority, especially for school-based and community-based learners, is as effective as possible.

The principal is supported very well by a senior management team and directors who together provide clear leadership for learning and effective management of college functions. Managers and staff are empowered to make decisions for the benefit of learners. They are supported well through high quality Continuous Professional Development (CPD).

The college has developed a *Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy* which provides a set of clearly-stated principles by which staff can improve their learning and teaching practice. College-led initiatives, such as the *Skills for Learning, Life and Work Framework* and the *Take Five* learning and teaching principles also provide effective direction for teaching staff. A recently-piloted peer review process is still at its early stages of development. Its potential to engage all staff in professional reflective dialogue about learning and teaching practice has yet to be realised. An enthusiastic team of four *Advanced Practitioners* provides constructive support for the development

and enhancement of learning and teaching across the college. All new teaching staff undertake a helpful induction programme, *Teaching @ Perth*, during their six-month probationary period.

Staff benefit from opportunities to undertake relevant CPD, including qualifications to masters degree level and above, in order to develop their own academic potential and maintain the currency of their skills and knowledge. Many staff also undertake academic research, which in some instances has a direct benefit for learners on FE programmes. Recent staff development events have focused usefully on learning and teaching and have raised staff awareness of equality and diversity, health and wellbeing and sustainability.

Leadership of services to support learners is very effective, with learners experiencing well-coordinated support both prior to and throughout their college experience. There is a clearly-understood vision that all staff will work together to enhance the learner experience. Strong collaborative working across support and curriculum areas results in services to learners that are readily accessible, appropriate and joined up. Many support staff also work well with external partners to ensure that transitions to and from college are smooth and that external agencies provide appropriate support for learners who require it. Communication and liaison between support and curriculum teams is also quick and effective. Helpful learning support is readily available for learners, including in core skills development and in the more general management of their learning.

There is a strong and effective quality culture across the college. Staff work well together and are responsive to the views of learners, which helps them to reflect constructively on the learning experience. This results in on-going improvements to programmes and services. All support and curriculum teams contribute well to self-evaluation aided by useful data, support and feedback from staff in the *Quality Unit* and the *Approval and Review Group*. Self-evaluation reports are reflective, evidence based and lead to appropriate actions for improvement. A suite of quality initiatives has resulted in significant improvement in performance at FE level in the past year. These initiatives include more robust data management and increasingly robust monitoring performance. Use of twice-yearly *Programme Progression Boards* conveys clear expectations of high performance to learners. Staff across the college are supported well to reflect on their practice and share good practice with each other in whole-college days which take place three times per year.

8. Signposting excellent and sector-leading and innovative practice

During the Education Scotland 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: Use of mobile technologies to enhance learning

A group of hairdressing staff have built on an action research project which helped them to understanding how the use of technology can improve the learner experience on FE programmes. Outcomes from this initial research project have led to the use of technology to enhance learners' engagement with their own learning, one of the college's key strategic aims.

Staff have identified that mobile smartphone technology is an ideal medium to use because of its widespread use amongst learners. They have made effective use of Quick Response (QR) codes. These digital pixel squares when scanned on a mobile phone connect directly to relevant interactive web resources which help learners to broaden their knowledge and understanding. Resources include case studies, *YouTube* links, quizzes and formative assessments. QR codes have been made widely available to learners and enable quick and easy access to these resources.

Learners studying on hairdressing programmes have responded to this initiative very well. They make very good use of the resources at times and in places which suit them, for example while travelling to college or socialising with classmates at break times. This is supporting improvements in self-directed learning research and revision, discussion and group projects. The enhanced underpinning knowledge that learners are gaining through this initiative has impacted positively on assessment outcomes.

Conscious that not all learners own a smartphone, staff have placed the resources on the VLE and also provide paper versions. Evaluation of the initiative has been very encouraging so far. The curriculum team is involving learners in the development of new learning resources. For example, learners are producing a video clip to demonstrate a particular hair colouring process. Learners are now engaging with staff to identify further developments of the technology.

8.2 Excellent practice: Football club for learners with additional support needs

This innovative project has successfully involved groups of learners with additional support needs in developing high level physical and personal skills through participation in football. These learners are studying on the (SVS) programme. While the project's key focus is on playing football to as high a standard as possible, it also aims to help learners develop team working and citizenship skills. It is supported through strong partnerships involving Perth and Kinross Council and St. Johnstone Football Club.

The project began as a pilot in January 2010 with eight learners playing football for an hour per week. This proved to be so successful that football training developed into a formalised option within the SVS curriculum. Currently, more than 18 learners take part.

The college now fields two teams playing competitively in different bands within the Scottish Football Association (SFA) structure. Learners have also participated successfully with Perth and Kinross Council and other community-based staff in events such as *Show Racism the Red Card*. The project has attracted support from within the college and from external voluntary groups. Other SVS learners follow the fortunes of the two football teams with great interest and a number of volunteers across the college support the project in other ways.

There has been a clear and positive impact on the learners involved. Many are using the programme to gain Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network qualifications which reflect achievement of core skills. Almost all demonstrate improved levels of engagement, increased confidence and greatly improved communication and social skills from previous levels. This has been endorsed by external partners as they have followed the progress of individuals. Most participating learners are embracing a much more active lifestyle than before, encouraged by free membership of the Perth and Kinross *Live Active* scheme.

Future plans include entering national competitions run by the SFA and Scottish Disability Sport. There are also plans to expand the programme to include other sports via the newly established *Saints Academy* run by the local authority.

8.3 Excellent practice: Partnership support for young people at risk of dropping out

The college has developed a transitional support programme *Youth Unlimited* for young people (14-16 years) who have dropped out of education. The programme is delivered outwith the main college campus. Its key aim is to help young people develop the confidence and skills to make positive connections with training, education or work opportunities and to develop the determination and resilience to get the best from these opportunities.

The programme is characterised by strong partnership working which include well-coordinated referral systems. It is delivered by a multi-agency team which includes Perth College UHI, Skills Development Scotland, Perth and Kinross Council and representatives of the voluntary and community sectors, including the Volunteer Centre, Perth.

The programme meets the needs of individual young people through close one-to-one support and weekly meetings with staff. There is a strong focus on the development of personal skills, with team working a particularly successful element. Vocational taster elements help learners to identify areas for further study.

Since the project received *Big Lottery* funding almost three years ago, following a successful pilot phase, approximately 130 young people have benefited from it. Almost all young people sustain their attendance on the programme once they start and many have achieved relevant qualifications. All young people involved with the project for six months or more are offered further training or employment. Approximately one-third have moved into college programmes with most sustaining their studies thereafter. Almost all young people involved have demonstrated increased motivation, confidence and social skills.

Due to its success, Perth and Kinross Council has confirmed that it will be merging *Youth Unlimited* with another service to provide an extended provision for this learner group once current funding ends. It will therefore become the lead partner in its delivery, working to build on success to date with the college and other partners.

9. What happens next?

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

Sheila Page
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.educationscotland.gov.uk.

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

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

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

[Readability Survey](#)

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http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/Images/FEReadabilitysurvey2011_tcm4-719342.doc

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

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

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Appendix 1

Glossary of terms

CPD	Continuing Professional Development
FE	Further Education
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IT	Information technology
QR	Quick Response
SCQF	Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework
SFA	Scottish Football Association
SFC	Scottish Funding Council
UHI	University of the Highlands and Islands
VLE	Virtual Learning Environment
SVS	Social and vocational studies

Appendix 2

The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework

SCQF Levels	SQA Qualifications			Qualifications of Higher Education Institutions	Scottish Vocational Qualifications
12				DOCTORAL DEGREE	
11				INTEGRATED MASTERS DEGREE / MASTERS DEGREE POST GRADUATE DIPLOMA POST GRADUATE CERTIFICATE	SVQ5
10				HONOURS DEGREE GRADUATE DIPLOMA GRADUATE CERTIFICATE	
9			PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AWARD	BACHELORS / ORDINARY DEGREE GRADUATE DIPLOMA GRADUATE CERTIFICATE	SVQ4
8		HIGHER NATIONAL DIPLOMA		DIPLOMA OF HIGHER EDUCATION	
7	ADVANCED HIGHER	HIGHER NATIONAL CERTIFICATE		CERTIFICATE OF HIGHER EDUCATION	SVQ3
6	HIGHER				
5	INTERMEDIATE 2 CREDIT STANDARD GRADE				SVQ2
4	INTERMEDIATE 1 GENERAL STANDARD GRADE	NATIONAL CERTIFICATE	NATIONAL PROGRESSION AWARD		SVQ1
3	ACCESS 3 FOUNDATION STANDARD GRADE				
2	ACCESS 2				
1	ACCESS 1				

The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework brings together all Scottish mainstream qualifications into a single unified framework. The framework includes: degree provision, HNC and HND, SQA National Qualifications, and SVQs. There are 12 levels ranging from Access 1 at SCQF level 1 to Doctoral degree at SCQF level 12. Each qualification whether a unit, group of units or larger group award has also been allocated a number of SCQF credits. Each credit represents 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.