

Edinburgh College achieves highest possible inspection rating



Edinburgh College has achieved the highest rating possible in its Education Scotland inspection report published today.

Education Scotland's overarching judgement on the college is that "Edinburgh College has in place effective arrangements to maintain and enhance the quality of its provision and outcomes for students and other stakeholders." This is the highest rating a college can achieve in the review process.

This means that "in relation to quality assurance and enhancement, the college is led well, has sufficiently robust arrangements to address any identified minor weaknesses, and is likely to continue to improve the quality of its services for students and other stakeholders."

Principal Mandy Exley welcomed the report: "I am delighted that we achieved the top rating in our recent inspection. I know we have all worked extremely hard since merger to create a college that meets the needs of students and industry. This has been demonstrated by our students' excellence and success, but it is also important to receive such a strong inspection report, highlighting success and innovation across the organisation.

"We will continue to work with our industry partners and our students' association to build on this success and to deliver even more opportunities that are relevant to the economic needs of Edinburgh and Scotland."

Her Majesty's inspectors spent a full week at the college in

late April and early May conducting in-depth research, observations and interviews with staff, students and stakeholders to test the quality of the learning experience.

Looking at strategic direction, the regional chair, board and principal are praised as “working well together to provide clear direction for the college’s development” with strategies and operational plans providing a clear and comprehensive basis for its future.

The report comments widely on many aspects of the college’s operations. The curriculum is described as meeting the needs of students and industry well, while the report notes that the college has extensive and highly successful strategic links with key partners within the region and further afield.

Dr Allan Colquhoun, university liaison and emerging technologies manager at Selex ES and chair of the newly launched Edinburgh College Development Trust, supports the college’s work with industry, commenting: “Edinburgh College should congratulate itself on a positive report. Although “effective” is the highest rating, this wording does not truly reflect the college’s achievements. Edinburgh College has delivered education in depth and breadth from schools to degree level that has resulted in most students moving on to employment or to other studies. The college successfully prepares students for work and supports business through apprenticeship and CPD programmes. It is clear that some of the good work done by the college has influenced the Wood Commission and will result in its good practice being shared across Scotland. The pioneering work on the Academies project, creating smooth pathways from school through college and onto university, will hopefully become the norm in the post-Wood landscape alongside the blending of academic and work-based learning as exemplified by the Graphic Design mentoring programme highlighted in the report.”

The inspectors recognised the college’s commitment to fully

involving students at every level of decision making, noting that “the college works very effectively in partnership at a strategic level with Edinburgh College Students’ Association (ECSA) and the student voice is influential at Board, College committee and campus level. The college has ensured that the student voice has been a major influence as it progressed through merger to become one institution and has pioneered an approach to student representation at a strategic level.”

Student achievement and success is strong, with 94% of students whose destinations are known progressing successfully to further study, apprenticeships or employment. The report goes on to state that successful completion rates on FE and HE full time programmes were above the national sector performance level, while within the subject areas of art and design, care, engineering, hospitality, land-based and sport and leisure, the levels of student success rank amongst the best in the sector.

As part of the report, the inspectors also highlight initiatives which are sector leading. They have singled out the college’s effective partnership working in setting up the South East Scotland Academies Partnership in conjunction with Queen Margaret University, employers and schools, a programme which benefits both students and employers.

Karen Prophet, education manager at the City of Edinburgh Council added: “The City of Edinburgh Council wish to acknowledge the positive partnership working through effective school college partnership provision which was recognised as innovative practice in today’s Education Scotland report on Edinburgh College. We look forward to developing our successful collaboration further to jointly deliver improved outcomes for young people. I’d like to congratulate Edinburgh College on this very positive inspection report.”

Links with industry are also key to another highlighted sector-leading initiative, the college’s innovative and

imaginative industry mentoring programme for HND Visual Communication Graphic Design students. The design industry links integral to this programme have resulted in students winning prestigious national awards and high numbers going on to further study or directly to successful careers in the industry.