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The Future of Further Education Annual Forum

The Ofsted view: delivering high quality in the midst of change

Melanie Hunt HMI

London 24 June 2010

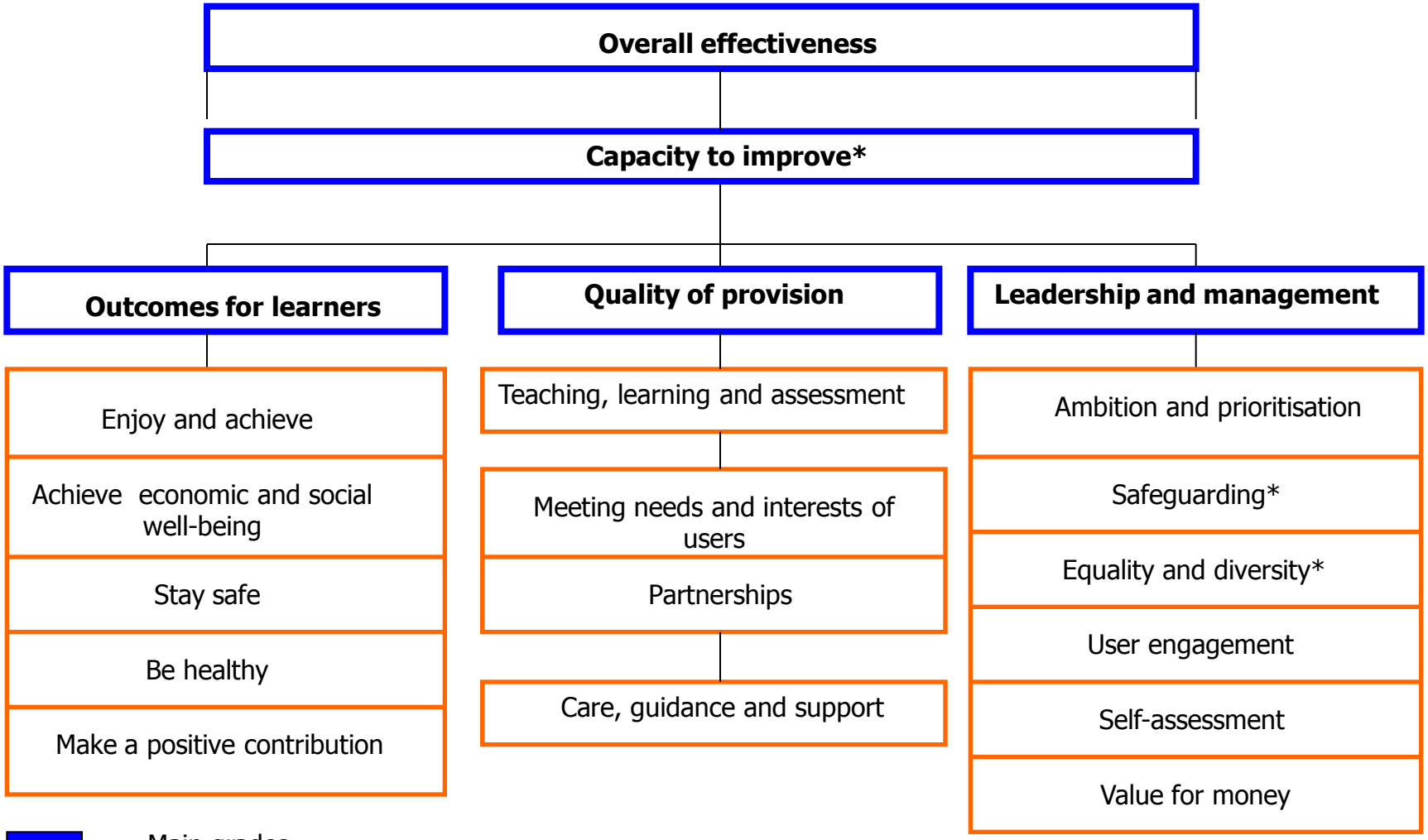
Defining quality

- Provider-owned
- Organisational mission
- Meeting the needs and expectations of learners and employers
- Assuring future funding
- Delivering value for money

Ofsted's contribution

- Common inspection framework – areas for consideration
- Grade descriptors / characteristics
- Reports and surveys
- Excellence Gateway
- Additional inspectors

Structure of grades



Main grades

Contributory grades denoted by a grade descriptor in the report and a grade on the RMF

* These grades may limit the overall effectiveness grade

Defining quality

So, what do learners and employers tell us about quality in the sector?

Employers' views

What employers like

- Flexibility and responsiveness of providers; sensitivity to employers' needs
- Quality of support provided to trainees
- Trainees' skill development and preparedness for the workplace

What employers would like to see improved

- Quality of communication with trainers
- Greater involvement in planning training and assessment and in reviews of learners' progress
- More stability in staffing, programmes and funding

Learners' views

What learners like

- Wide range of provision
- Individual support from staff
- How the provider listens to and acts upon their views
- Relevant and up to date facilities and staff expertise
- Opportunities to develop practical skills

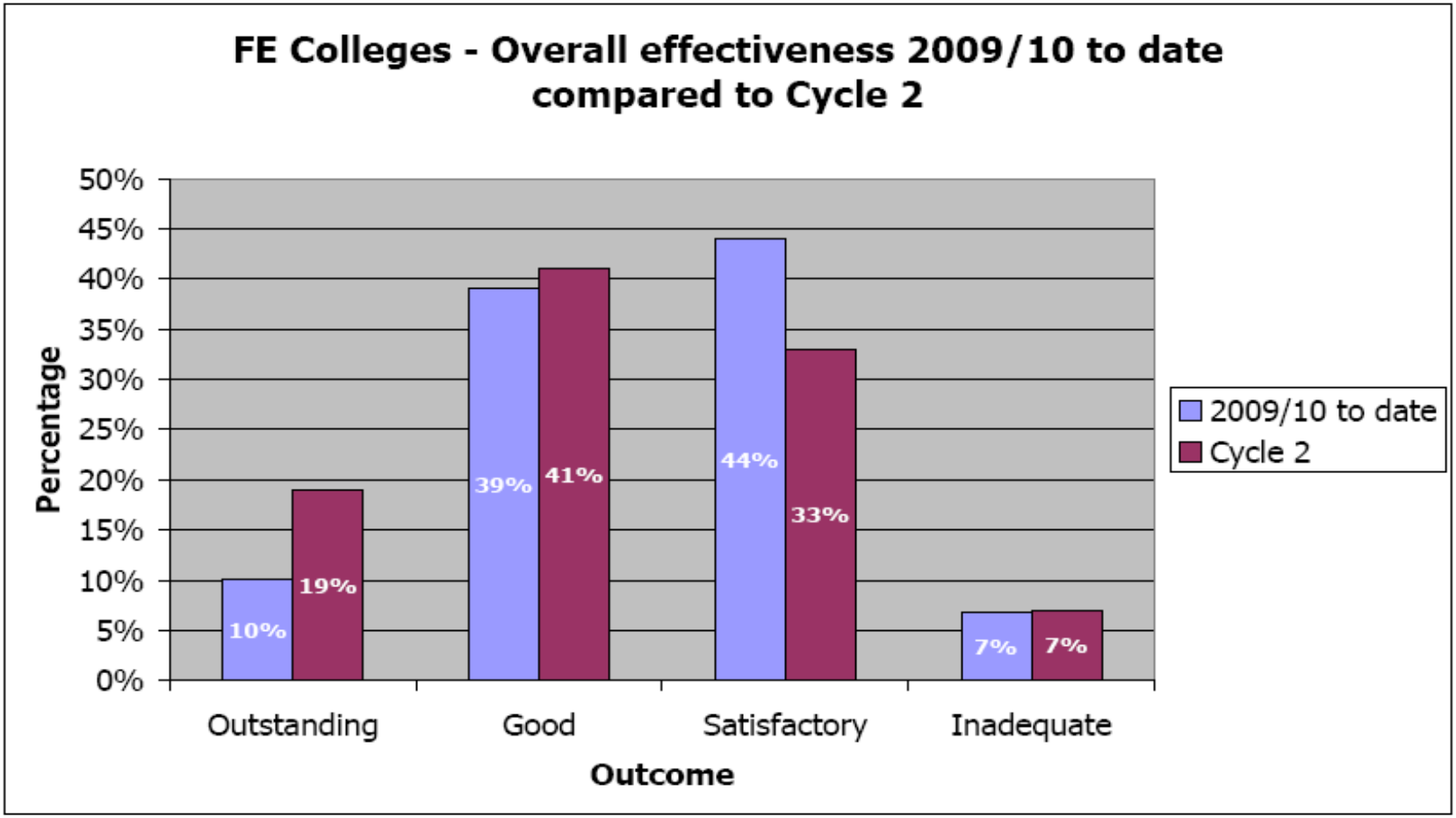
What learners would like to see improved

- Better timetabling/ programme planning to improve use of time
- Enrichment opportunities and information about them
- Food, parking and social space in colleges

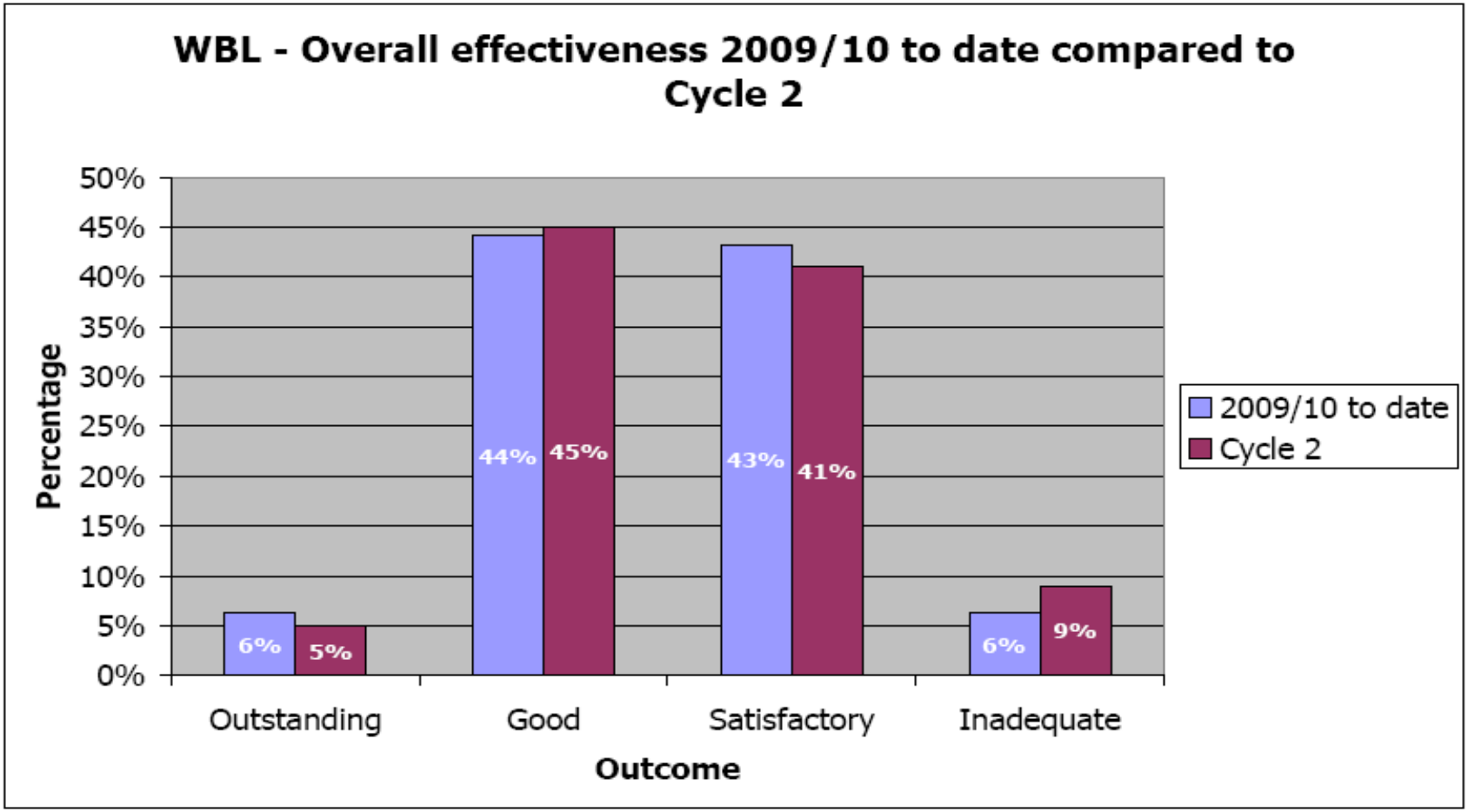
Achieving quality

How well is the sector doing this year?

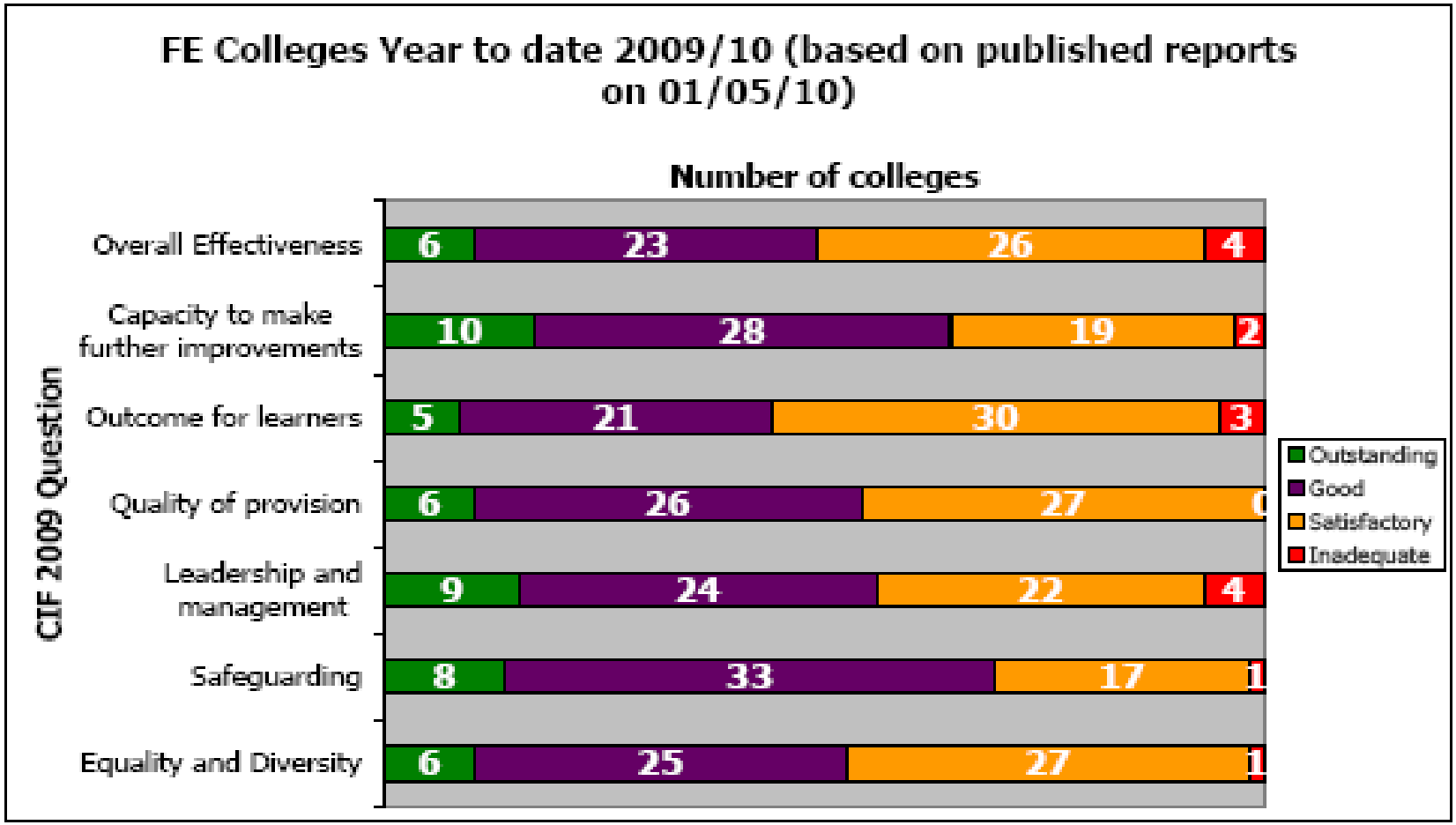
Comparison last cycle and now – Colleges (including ISCs and FE in HE)



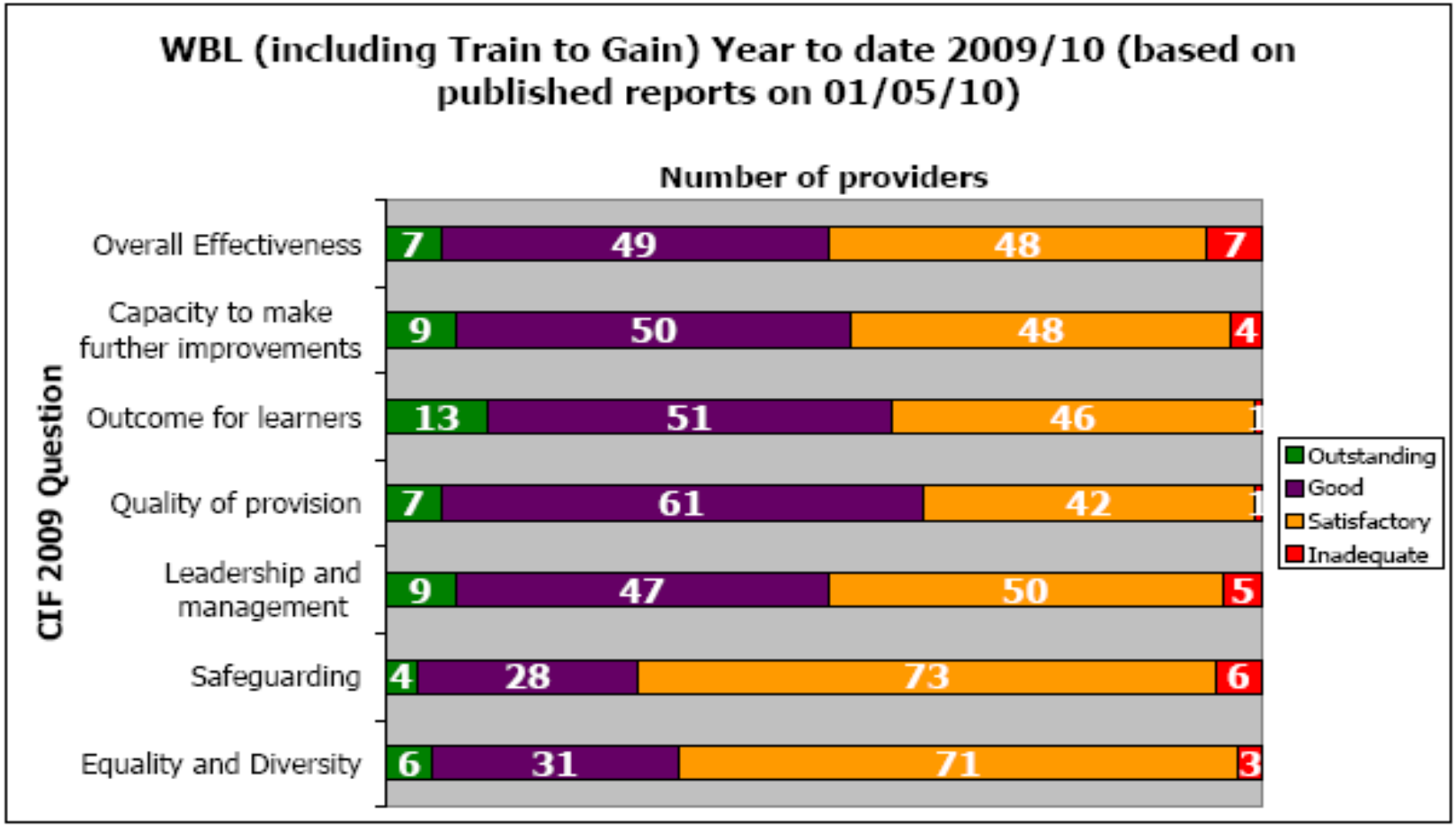
Comparison last cycle and now – Work-based learning



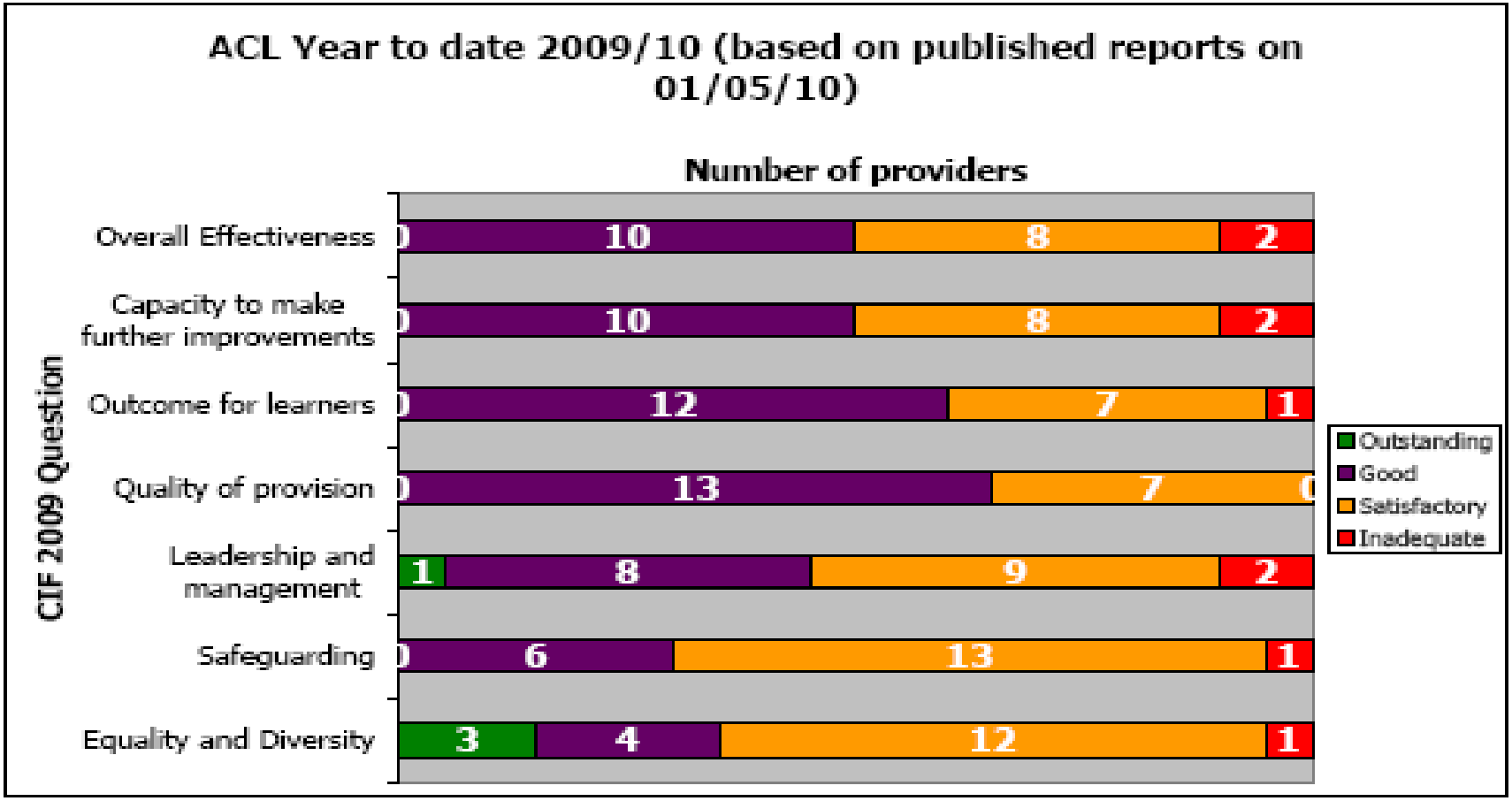
Summary of inspection outcomes – FE Colleges (including ISCs and FE in HE)



Summary of inspection outcomes – WBL (including Train to Gain)



Summary of inspection outcomes – Adult and Community Learning



Summary of inspection outcomes – DWP Contracted Employment Provision

Summary of inspection outcomes – **nextstep**

Features of providers who deliver and maintain high quality

Clear strategic direction

Shared values; whole organisation commitment; promote inclusion and value diversity

Responsive to learners, employers and communities; use labour market information; learner voice; engage employers in design and delivery of learning

Complementary working with partners

Curriculum that considers the whole learner experience; develops knowledge and skills; flexibility

Strong focus on induction; initial assessment and tailoring of programmes; learning, assessment and progression planning

Features of providers who deliver and maintain high quality

Imaginative teaching, learning and assessment, enlivened by real work experience

Governing / supervisory body that is challenging

Management capacity throughout the organisation; visible, decisive, empowering

Staff capacity; skills matched to mission; informed, engaged and consulted; developed for succession

Continuous improvement; intelligent use of data; ambitious targets; self critical; observations leading to action and development

Capacity to innovate

Can these be delivered at a time of change?

- Necessary for survival
- Embed within organisational processes
- Prioritise
- Manage performance
- Don’t get distracted

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Raising standards, improving lives

Inspection evidence:

What does good teaching look like?

Inspection evidence

- Inspection evidence continues to provide very clear and precise evidence of **the components of good teaching**:
  - the application of good subject knowledge
  - clear direction and good lesson structure that provide the right pace and high expectations for all learners
  - skilful questioning and opportunities for independent and exploratory learning to develop learners' understanding
  - the effective use of assessment for learning.

Good subject knowledge

- Good subject knowledge, alongside pedagogic skills, is an essential prerequisite for good teaching. It enables teachers to:
  - select a rich variety of examples, exercises, practical activities, problems and extended investigations that challenge and extend learners' understanding
  - focus on the big ideas in the subject, to know how much depth is appropriate for groups of varied ability and
  - to make links between different aspects of the subject.
  - probe understanding, informally assess learners as they work, and adapt the lesson accordingly, as well as stimulate enjoyment.
  - know what the next step for each learner should be, and therefore underpins reliable assessment.

Structure, pace and high expectations

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All well-structured, well-paced lessons share some key characteristics:

- a clear purpose that the learner understands.
- they support learning that is active and cumulative.
- include a variety of well-chosen activities which are suitable for developing the desired skills and understanding of learners.
- set high expectations for all learners. The best teachers are able to adapt and adjust their teaching during the course of a lesson to respond to how well their pupils or students have understood a particular concept.

The use of questions

- The skilful use of well-chosen questions to engage and challenge learners and to consolidate understanding is an important feature of good teaching.
- In the best early years settings, children learn to think and understand for themselves, inspired by adults' open questions.
- In schools and colleges, the best teachers use carefully phrased questions that are pitched appropriately to challenge pupils and students.
- Good teachers support learners by providing time for thinking and discussion, encouraging them to justify their answers and deepen their understanding.
- Employing a broad range of questions enables teachers to test which aspects of a topic have been understood and where weaknesses remain.

Independent and exploratory learning

- An important component in developing learners' understanding of a subject is providing the opportunity for them to work independently or in small groups on longer and more complex tasks.
- Ofsted's recent survey report on mathematics shows clearly how the best teachers give students time to think and to 'have a go' with unusual or open-ended problems which require application of mathematical concepts.
- Such teaching is still too rare. Too often, learners' understanding is limited by teachers moving on from a topic too quickly, stepping in and providing the answer too soon, or simply not devoting enough time in the lesson to more discursive and exploratory learning.

Teaching of vocational subjects

- Theory classes are often not as effective as practical sessions. Theory teaching is most successful when the relevance of the topic and links to practical situations are made clear and where regular use is made of learners' own work experience to illustrate key points of learning.
- Practical sessions are most effective when held in well resourced learning environments that reflect contemporary working environments, and where teachers have up-to-date knowledge of developments in their professional or vocational area which they use well to devise learning activities.
- Effective assignments reflect contemporary working practices and, where appropriate, incorporate commercial challenges and 'live briefs' when learners are expected to respond to external clients.
- Work-based learning is most effective when learners are encouraged to take full advantage of opportunities to widen their experience in the workplace and strong support is provided by their supervisors and managers to consolidate what they have learnt.