

# Havant College

## Reinspection monitoring visit report

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**Unique reference number:** 130702

**Name of lead inspector:** Alan Hinchliffe HMI

**Last day of inspection:** 12 January 2012

**Type of provider:** Sixth form college

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## **Focused/Reinspection Monitoring Visit: Main Findings**

### **Context and focus of visit**

Havant College is a large sixth form college located near the centre of Havant in south-east Hampshire. It attracts students from a wide area. Five other colleges are located within a 12-mile radius. Most students take General Certificate of Education AS- and A-level programmes, from the wide choice available.

Havant College was last inspected in May 2011. At that inspection, overall effectiveness, outcomes for learners, leadership and management and capacity to improve were judged to be satisfactory. The quality of provision, including teaching and learning, was judged to be good. Four subject areas were inspected. English and communications, and business, administration and law were judged to be good, social sciences satisfactory, and science and mathematics inadequate. This report focuses on the themes explored during the visit.

### **Themes**

#### **Self-assessment and improvement planning**

<b>What progress has been made in identifying and improving areas of weaker performance through effective quality assurance procedures?</b>	<b>Reasonable progress</b>
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Since the previous inspection, arrangements for quality assurance and self-assessment have continued to improve. Self-assessment procedures have become increasingly effective at identifying areas of weaker performance, and developing appropriate actions to improve provision. Both individual course self-assessment reports and the overall college self-assessment report are more evaluative and less descriptive. The reports are concise and cover the key elements of students' performance, the quality of teaching and learning, and the effectiveness of leadership and management. Data are used very well in the course reports to sharpen accountability for students' performance. Each report contains accurate information on students' performance and the progress students make, and this is broken down to provide data on individual teaching groups. As a consequence, college leaders and curriculum managers have a succinct and clear account of students' achievements on each course, and teachers' performance reviews are now better informed by how well their students do. In a minority of course reports, data analysis is superficial and focuses too much on students' attributes to explain poor performance, without sufficient consideration of what teachers and managers could do to improve students' desire to succeed and their progress.

Inspection evidence shows that the more rigorous quality assurance procedures have led to improved performance in some subjects, although the impact of measures to improve accountability is yet to be seen consistently across the college. However, the combination of sharper self-assessment and action planning, and much more

rigorous monitoring of individual students' progress on their courses, is a valuable precursor to sustained and consistent improvement.

### **Outcomes for learners**

**What progress has been made in improving outcomes for students, particularly on AS-level courses?**

**Reasonable  
progress**

The proportion of students who complete their courses successfully rose in 2010/11 in comparison with the previous year, and is very close to the national average for sixth form colleges. Nearly all students who start the second year of an A-level course are successful, and around half of them achieve grades A or B. Performance at AS level has improved, but remains slightly below that typically seen in a sixth form college. The proportion of students achieving high grades at AS level fell slightly in 200/11, and is below the national average. As the college recognises, a significant minority of AS-level courses remain where too few students succeed. No noticeable variations are apparent in the results of male or female students, or in those from different minority ethnic heritages, with the exception of the very good progress made by students of Chinese origin.

The prior attainment at GCSE of students on advanced-level courses at the college is slightly higher than is seen in the average sixth form college. Broadly, students achieve the grades predicted by their prior attainment, and the progress students make has improved slightly over the last year. In several subjects, students make exceptionally good progress. However, in too many subjects, particularly at AS level, too many students do not achieve their full potential.

### **Quality of provision**

**What progress has been made in ensuring a consistently high standard of teaching and learning across the college, by reducing the number of lessons that do not provide sufficient challenge for all students?**

**Reasonable  
progress**

At the previous inspection, teaching and learning were judged to be good, but the report commented that a minority of lessons does not provide sufficient challenge for all students. The college's own lesson observation scheme reports that 80% of lessons are good or better, with 25% outstanding. College observers write a detailed report following a lesson observation, and where a lesson is judged satisfactory this is accompanied by an action plan designed to help the teacher to improve. Scrutiny of the lesson observation reports shows that judgements are usually well supported, although for lessons judged to be outstanding the strengths of the lesson are not always articulated sufficiently. In general, the reports tend to overemphasise the process of teaching at the expense of clear judgements on exactly what students learn and how quickly and effectively they do so. This tendency is exacerbated by the cumbersome nature of the report format, which requires observers to comment on 21 different aspects of the lesson, followed by an overall evaluation. Where the overall evaluation is brief, it can be difficult for the reader to form a clear picture of

the strengths and weaknesses of the lesson in respect of students' learning. The college does not pay sufficient attention to the scrutiny of students' files, which can provide valuable evidence on many aspects of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.

Teachers benefit from a good range of staff development opportunities that are focused appropriately on a wide variety of strategies to raise further the quality of classroom practice.

**What progress has been made in improving tutorial provision so that it is more effective in supporting and promoting academic achievement for all students?** **Reasonable progress**

Since the previous inspection, tutorial provision has been reorganised to ensure a sharper focus by tutors when having individual discussions with students about their progress. Each student has an electronic personal learning plan, which contains a wealth of detail about their progress in each course. Currently, because the plans have only been in use since October 2011, their full potential has yet to be realised. For example, in several of the plans scrutinised during the inspection students' targets were insufficiently precise, students themselves had contributed little to the reviews, and the progress made in achieving targets was not up to date. Nevertheless, both tutors and students find the plans invaluable in giving a clear overview of progress, and they have the potential to become a powerful tool in raising achievement if they are used frequently and rigorously to set and monitor demanding targets for students to meet.

Academic support has also been strengthened through improvements in initial assessment and follow-up work. In addition to the more careful identification of students with specific support needs, students on advanced-level courses with lower prior attainment are identified at an early stage and invited to attend additional study skills sessions. Although the take-up of this additional support is not yet as high as the college would wish, strategies to improve this are well considered.

**What progress has been made in reviewing the curriculum so that students take key/functional skills qualifications that better match their needs and interests?** **Reasonable progress**

In the previous inspection report, the college was urged to review the provision of functional skills in information technology (IT) and wider key skills in order to meet students' needs and interests more closely. In response to this, the college has introduced a new qualification, an award in Thinking and Reasoning Skills, for students in their first year of advanced-level study. This is an improvement on the previous arrangement, as the new award has the potential to assist students in developing both their academic skills and their capacity for independent research and study. The college continues to enter most students for a functional skills qualification in IT at either foundation or intermediate level. The proportion of students who achieve their IT qualification has risen significantly and is now good.

This is partly because college staff have had some success in persuading students of the value of an IT qualification not just for their employment prospects but also for those wishing to study at university.

**What progress has been made in improving the quality of provision in science and mathematics?**

**Reasonable  
progress**

Since the previous inspection the college has taken rapid action to address many of the weaknesses identified in science and mathematics. Many of these developments are new and have yet to fully prove their worth, but they are appropriate and well considered. A new curriculum director for science took up post on 1 January 2012. He has a strong track record of improving science provision in schools, including a school with a sixth form, and already has a clear grasp of the issues facing science and well thought-out approaches to drive improvements. There have been some improvements in success rates in some subjects across science and mathematics, but significant pockets of underperformance remain. There have been significant improvements to around half the laboratories and the rest will be improved by the next academic year. Self-assessment is more thorough and now has a clear focus on student performance data and the quality of teaching and learning. Subject reviews identify clearly areas for improvement and these are related closely to raising the quality of teaching and learning and students' progress and success. Approaches to teaching and learning are changing and more attention is paid to individual students' needs in lessons. The rigour of assessment and the quality of written feedback in some areas still need to improve to ensure that students experience a more consistent approach to these aspects of their learning. Target grades to encourage students to make better progress are now shared well with tutors using the new computer-based system.

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