



Joseph Chamberlain Sixth Form College



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

Better
education
and care

Inspection report

Audience
Post-sixteen

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130468

Contents

Basic information about the college	3
Background of the organisation	4
Scope of the inspection	4
<hr/>	
Summary of grades awarded	6
<hr/>	
Overall judgement	7
Main findings	9

Basic information about the college

Name of college:	Joseph Chamberlain Sixth Form College
Type of college:	Sixth Form
Principal:	Lynne Morris
Address of college:	Highgate, Birmingham, B12 9DS
Telephone number:	0121 446 2223
Fax number:	0121 440 0798
Chair of governors:	Richard Bate
Unique reference number:	130468
Name of lead inspector:	Melanie Kavanagh, HMI
Dates of inspection:	16 – 20 January 2006

Background of the organisation

1. Joseph Chamberlain Sixth Form College is a medium sized sixth form college situated a mile south of Birmingham City centre in the Sparkbrook ward of Birmingham. Approximately 90% of learners come from postcodes with a very high deprivation index and 65% of learners are in receipt of Educational Maintenance Allowances (EMA). Learners enter the college with a lower GCSE points score than is typical for sixth form colleges.
2. The college has a very high percentage of learners of minority ethnic heritage and the college community is ethnically, culturally and religiously diverse. In 2004, 97% of learners identified themselves as belonging to a minority ethnic group. The college profile broadly mirrors the local population with the largest groups being Pakistani and Bangladeshi. The majority of learners are aged 16-18 and studying full time on advanced level courses. The largest number of learners aged 16-18 study science and mathematics and languages, literature and culture. The college also provides intermediate courses, including full-time GCSE courses, for approximately 100 learners. The gender balance in 2004 for full time learners was 40% male and 60% female.
3. The college works with over 1,000 adults from the community. The majority of these are women whose mother tongue is not English and who are often family members of other learners. Over 70% of learners in the community are female. Courses are run at the college, primary and secondary schools, mosques, temples, churches and community settings. There are partnerships with seven supplementary weekend schools representing communities from Chinese, Tamil, Turkish and Arabic heritages.
4. In 2004, the college was awarded Beacon College status. Its mission is to serve the education and training needs of the diverse populations of the City and beyond, especially those from inner city areas, those aged 16-20 and adults returning to learning. The mission further states that the college is committed to raising aspirations and qualifications of its learners so that they are able to realise their full potential.

Scope of the inspection

5. In deciding the scope of this inspection, inspectors took account of: the college's previous inspection report (www.ofsted.gov.uk); the college's most recent self-assessment report and development plans; comments from the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC); reports from the inspectorate annual assessment visits; and data on enrolments and learners' achievements over the period since the last inspection. This inspection focused on the following aspects:

- overall effectiveness of the college and its capacity to improve further
- achievements and standards
- quality of provision
- leadership and management

Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision	Outstanding: grade 1
Capacity to improve	Outstanding: grade 1
Achievements and standards	Good: grade 2
Quality of provision	Outstanding: grade 1
Leadership and management	Outstanding: grade 1

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Outstanding: grade 1

6. Learners' achievements are good. Learners on advanced level courses make very good or outstanding progress compared to their prior achievement. Success rates are broadly similar for all learners regardless of gender or ethnicity. Attendance and punctuality are good. Learners progress well to further and higher education and employment. Poor pass rates for adults on ESOL courses in 2005 have been addressed effectively and standards and progress are now good.
7. The quality of provision is outstanding. Teaching is good and learning is highly effective. Learners are well motivated and attentive. Study skills are very effectively supported and encouraged. Accommodation and resources are adequate, although the building is poor and deteriorating.
8. The college's approach to educational and social inclusion is outstanding. Diversity is valued, respected and celebrated. There are very strong links with schools and the community. The college's adult community provision is extensive and it works very effectively with many community organisations.
9. Learners receive outstanding support and guidance both before they enter the college and whilst they are studying. The tutorial programme is highly effective. Parents and carers are well informed about learners' progress.
10. Leadership and management are outstanding. The principal, governors and senior managers have set a clear and appropriate strategic direction for the college. Quality assurance procedures are exceptionally effective in securing improvements. Financial management is good. The college provides good value for money.

Capacity to improve

Outstanding: grade 1

11. The college has an outstanding capacity to improve. Managers and governors focus effectively on raising standards and improving learners' learning experiences and outcomes. They implement rigorous performance management systems which promote improvement successfully. Quality assurance systems are thorough and challenging. Departmental reviews accurately determine the key issues to address and the strengths to sustain. Managers take effective action to address under-performing areas. The overall quality of provision is excellent. The use of information learning and communication technologies is increasingly effective. Most success rates are improving and the progress made by many learners compared with their previous attainment is very good and some is outstanding. The college's self-assessment report is accurate, analytical and self-critical. The management information system now provides managers

with reliable data which they use well to analyse performance and address areas of concern. The college's financial position is very good. Physical and human resources are deployed very effectively. The college has well considered plans for a new building on an adjacent site.

The effectiveness of the steps taken by the college to promote improvement since the last inspection

12. The college has taken outstanding steps to improve. All the key weaknesses identified at the last inspection in November 2001 have been addressed. Retention and pass rates have mostly increased. In particular, success rates for learners on levels 2 and 3 provision have risen and learners make good or outstanding progress compared to their prior attainment. Accommodation has improved and learners have better learning resource centres and quiet study areas. Learners' attendance and punctuality are now good. The skills for life strategy, previously identified as a weakness, is comprehensive and appropriate. The college has made major improvements to its quality assurance systems. Managers identify weaknesses and address them through rigorous review and monitoring processes. The management information system is well managed and provides highly useful data to managers at all levels.

Key strengths of the college

Strengths

- Inspirational and effective leadership
- Highly effective learning
- Very good, and some outstanding progress of learners
- Outstanding educational and social inclusion
- Excellent guidance and support
- Exceptionally good quality assurance

Areas for improvement

The college should address:

- Pass rates on ESOL courses
- Poor and deteriorating buildings
- Insufficient monitoring of the impact of additional learning support

Main findings

Achievements and standards

Good: grade 2

13. Inspectors agreed with the college's judgement that achievement and standards are good. Pass rates at GCE AS level and GCE A level have been at the national average for the years between 2003 and 2004 and rose to slightly above the national average in 2005. Many learners enter the college with low or average prior attainment. Both value added analyses to which the college subscribes, show that these learners make very good or outstanding progress and achieve grades significantly higher than those predicted by their GCSE results. Learners on GCE AS courses make outstanding progress in English, mathematics, philosophy, physics and religious studies. Learners on GCE A level courses also make very good progress and, in many subjects, achieve results significantly higher than those predicted.
14. Retention rates for learners aged 16-18 are good and improving. Retention for adult learners on intermediate and advanced level courses has been significantly above national averages for the years between 2002 and 2005. There are strong and improving success rates for learners on intermediate and advanced level courses compared to the national averages for sixth form colleges serving disadvantaged areas. Most pass rates are at or slightly above the national averages. Adult learners' pass rates have been significantly above the national averages for the past three years. However, in 2005 there was a sharp decline in pass rates on level 1 and short courses due to poor ESOL results. The college has identified and addressed the issues which led to these poor results. The standards and progress of the substantial number of ESOL learners are now good.
15. Success rates are broadly similar for all learners regardless of gender or ethnicity. At the time of the last inspection, poor attendance and punctuality were identified as key areas for development. The college has addressed successfully these weaknesses and average attendance for full time learners in 2005 was over 90%, which is slightly above the average attendance during inspections of sixth form colleges in 2004. Learners are punctual and learning is not interrupted by latecomers.
16. The quality of learners' written and oral work is good. Learners participate effectively in class discussions and respond well to teachers' questions. There is improving progression to higher education with 72% of learners in 2005 progressing to universities. Learners on intermediate courses achieve well and the majority of them progress to further education, advanced level courses or employment. Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress to employment and education.

Quality of provision

Outstanding: grade 1

17. Teaching and learning are good. The college self-assessment report reflects accurately the quality and areas for development in teaching. There is an effective programme of formal lesson observations. Lesson observations have clear and explicit links to appraisal, action plans and staff training and development. The college collates lessons observation grades, but there is insufficiently detailed analysis to identify trends over time.
18. Most lessons are good. Lessons are well prepared; teachers have good subject knowledge and an extremely good rapport with learners. Learners are attentive, motivated and enjoy their work. Their behaviour is exemplary. Teachers develop effectively specialist subject vocabulary and have an appropriate focus on preparation for examinations. Many teachers use questions well to check and challenge learners' understanding. In a small minority of lessons, teachers' questions do not stimulate learners' thinking or advance learning effectively. Teachers reinforce learning extremely well at every opportunity both within lessons and through informal support out of lessons. Teachers address the different needs of learners well. The college has identified learners capable of the highest grades in order to provide them with appropriate extension activities. Particularly good use is made of ILT. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. Most classrooms have adequate teaching and learning resources. New interactive whiteboards are being used to good effect to enhance teaching and learning.
19. The monitoring of learners' progress is outstanding. Learners on advanced courses are set challenging yet realistic targets. Learners are given their target grades and teachers review them regularly. The needs of learners at risk of underachieving are identified and addressed promptly. Records of learners' progress are also used to good effect as part of the lesson observation procedure. The college is in the process of extending this system to its community provision. Teachers set homework regularly, which is marked quickly and returned to learners with detailed comments and helpful indications of how to further improve their work.
20. Identification of, and provision for, support for additional learning needs is very good. Qualified staff carry out prompt initial assessment for literacy and numeracy needs. Additional diagnostic tests identify specific learning needs. Other, less formal, methods of referral are also successful at identifying additional learning needs. However, the systems to monitor the impact of additional learning support are underdeveloped.
21. The college's approach to social and educational inclusion is outstanding. A thoroughly inclusive environment where diversity is valued, respected and celebrated has been successfully created. Learners feel safe and secure in the college. Community provision is extensive. Partnerships with a number of local community organisations through its 'college in the community programme' are effective. Much of this provision targets women who are in need of ESOL as a

first step towards further education or employment. Crèche facilities or subsidies for childcare are provided at all centres. The college also offers good 14-16 provision in collaboration with local schools.

22. The college offers a comprehensive range of general courses including appropriate vocational courses. The college offers courses from entry level to advanced level including 33 advanced level courses. It also provides a range of popular locally spoken languages in its syllabus including Chinese, Arabic, Urdu and Bengali. There are good progression pathways within each department and across the college.
23. The college has excellent partnerships with schools to provide a good range of 14-16 provision spanning entry level to working with very able learners. The numbers of learners aged 14-16 have doubled in the past two years from 150 in 2004 to 300 at the time of the inspection. The college contributes effectively to schools' development through its subject specialism of science. A good range of subject specific and general enrichment activities are offered. Departments provide a very good range of extension activities, which complement and enhance learners' appreciation of their subjects.
24. Guidance and support are outstanding. Learners receive clear and unbiased initial guidance. A well-managed induction programme introduces learners to the college effectively and allows them to settle quickly into their studies and make friends. The college provides outstanding individual support to learners. Staff are fully committed to the learners and provide excellent support for academic subjects in and out of formal lesson time.
25. The tutorial programme is highly effective. Learners have detailed and clear individual targets which are monitored in detail. Tutorials place a good emphasis on personal development as well as academic progress. A well-developed programme of tutorial topics includes health, finance and careers. The college has taken vigorous and successful action to improve attendance and punctuality including the appointment of a bilingual attendance officer. Parents and carers are well informed of learners' progress.
26. A wide range of additional support systems are available to learners including access to careers and counselling services. The careers advisor is new in post and some areas of the service are still underdeveloped. Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities needs receive very effective support.

Leadership and management

Outstanding: grade 1

27. Leadership and management are outstanding. The leadership of the principal is inspirational and effective. The principal, senior managers and governors have set a clear and appropriate strategic direction for the college. The college is highly responsive to the diverse needs of students, parents, carers and local schools and communities.

28. The quality assurance systems are outstandingly effective. The self-assessment report is analytical, self-critical and accurate. Teachers use achievement data very effectively to set students' targets and to monitor progress. Shared lesson observations with college managers indicate that their judgements are accurate.
29. Leadership and management of departments are outstanding. Departmental reviews are comprehensive and include a rigorous analysis of achievement data. New action plans contain specific targets against which middle and senior managers monitor progress systematically.
30. The learning environment for students from diverse backgrounds is safe, happy and harmonious. The college analyses data on students' achievements by age, gender and ethnicity and takes appropriate action. Although the college's implementation of race relations practice is exemplary, it does not monitor this through an action plan and staff and governor training are incomplete. The college meets the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act and it secures good outcomes for young people as identified in the Children Act. The college implements appropriate procedures to meet the requirements of the Child Protection Act.
31. College staff are well qualified and experienced. The college analyses data effectively on staff recruitment and promotion by age, gender and ethnicity. The outcomes of lesson observations feed into the appraisal scheme and both inform a substantial and supportive staff development programme.
32. The fabric of the college building is deteriorating and the college's plans for a new building are well advanced. Managers have improved students' learning resources, prayer and social areas. The college continues to invest effectively in information learning and communication technologies.
33. Financial management is very good. Overall college success rates are good, apart from those for ESOL in 2004/05. The progress made by most students compared with their previous attainment is very good and some is exceptional. An increasing proportion of learners progress to higher education. The college provides good value for money.
34. Governance is outstanding. Governors are determined to raise students' achievements. They challenge and support senior managers in order to enhance the learning environment. They use their extensive skills and experience to promote further improvements effectively.

Learners' achievements

Table 1

Success rates on mainstream level 1 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2002 to 2004, compared to the national rates for colleges of a similar type.

College Cohort Performance (2001/02-2003/04) - Success Rate - Level 1 long

Table S-1: College success rate for level 1 long qualifications by qualification type, expected end year and age

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16-18				19+			
		Starts - Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff	Starts - Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
1 Long	01/02	196	70	54	16	274	19	32	-12
	02/03	262	54	68	-14	833	43	40	3
	03/04	417	72	74	-2	753	47	49	-2
GNVQs and precursors	01/02	40	63			3	33		
	02/03	34	79			1	100		
	03/04	25	76			3	67		
NVQs	01/02	0				0			
	02/03	0				0			
	03/04	0				0			
Other	01/02	156	72	47	25	271	19	32	-12
	02/03	228	50	68	-18	832	43	40	3
	03/04	392	72	73	-1	750	47	50	-3

Table 2

Success rates on mainstream level 2 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2002 to 2004, compared to the national rates for colleges of a similar type.

College Cohort Performance (2001/02 - 2003/04) - Success Rate - Level 2 long

Table S-2: College success rate for level 2 long qualifications by qualification type, expected end year and age

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16-18				19+			
		Starts - Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff	Starts - Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
2 Long	01/02	656	76	69	7	217	38	40	-2
	02/03	843	78	71	8	286	63	48	14
	03/04	832	85	75	10	187	57	47	10
GCSEs	01/02	564	77	72	5	146	45		
	02/03	659	80	73	7	139	62		
	03/04	697	88	77	10	122	64		
GNVQs and precursors	01/02	83	75	70	5	16	0		
	02/03	117	62	69	-6	49	67		
	03/04	58	74	71	3	1	0		
NVQs	01/02	0				0			
	02/03	0				0			
	03/04	7	57			16	69	52	17
Other	01/02	9	11			55	29	29	0
	02/03	67	90	62	27	98	61	41	20
	03/04	70	76	73	2	48	38	32	5

Chart S-2: College success rate for level 2 long qualifications by qualification type, expected end year and age

Table 3

Success rates on mainstream level 3 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2002 to 2004, compared to the national rates for colleges of a similar type.

Table S-3: College success rate for level 3 long qualifications by qualification type, expected end year and age

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16-18				19+			
		Starts - Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff	Starts - Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
3 Long	01/02	1,349	83	71	12	182	67	49	18
	02/03	1,818	63	72	-9	211	65	53	12
	03/04	2,095	76	75	1	216	75	58	17
AIA2 levels	01/02	408	86	85	1	71	68		
	02/03	414	92	88	4	101	75		
	03/04	485	90	89	1	88	81		
AS levels	01/02	818	86	66	20	85	78		
	02/03	1,041	69	66	2	98	61		
	03/04	1,180	67	69	-2	104	72		
GNVQs and precursors	01/02	121	50	50	-1	13	23		
	02/03	77	62	63	0	3	67		
	03/04	116	59	68	-8	7	29		
NVQs	01/02	0				0		56	
	02-03	0				0		52	
	03/04	0				0		51	
Other	01/02	2	50			13	38	21	17
	02/03	286	0	54	-54	9	0		
	03/04	314	94	57	37	17	82		

Chart S-3: College success rate for level 3 long qualifications by qualification type, expected end year and age