

## ANNUAL ASSESSMENT VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Name of College: Gateway Sixth Form College  
Date of visit: 12 October 2006

This feedback contains brief findings from the annual assessment visit. It focuses on the themes explored during the visit and does not attempt to give a comprehensive overview of the college's performance.

### Achievement and standards

The last inspection report (January 2006) states that some GCE AS level subjects and key skills level 3 had success rates lower than the national averages in 2004/05. Have these improved in 2005/06?

- College data show that success and pass rates for GCE AS subjects declined in 2005/06 compared with 2004/05. Success rates on the new applied GCE AS in information and communication technology and in health and social care were disappointing. However, overall retention rates improved and are around national averages. Success rates on GCE A level subjects remain high. Overall, key skills success rates have improved considerably in the last three years. However, success rates for key skills level 3 have been low for three years, except for communication which improved considerably in 2005/06.

What has been the impact of the raising achievement project in 2005/06 on the pass rates on literacy and numeracy levels 1 and 2 courses?

- The project has been effective. These pass rates have improved markedly in 2005/06 compared with 2004/05, except for literacy at level 1 which is about the same.

Have the proportions of learners gaining high-grade passes in GCE AS and A2 subjects improved in 2005/06?

- The proportion of learners gaining high grades declined in 2005-06 compared with 2004/05 in both GCE AS and A level subjects. In 2004/05, most learners made good progress at the college compared with their prior attainment on entry.

## Quality of education and training

What is the impact of the actions taken to improve the quality of the tutorial programme?

- The new system is already having an impact on tutors, but it is too early to judge the effect on learners. The aim is for the group tutorial to become more coherent and consistent. The new tutorial management team wants to integrate each of the every child matters aspects into the tutorial programme. Previously, tutorials were managed in divisions and were of variable quality.

Do managers monitor sufficiently the standards of teaching and learning in tutorials? What changes as a result of this monitoring to benefit learners?

- Previously managers did not prioritise tutorials or key skills lessons as part of the lesson observation system. They will do so in 2006/07, but it is too early to judge any impact.

Do all learners experience a comprehensive personal social and health education (PSHE) programme through the tutorial programme? How well does the college support learners to achieve economic well-being?

- Many learners do experience a full PSHE programme but not all. Managers aim to involve specialist sections of the college and external agencies to ensure that all aspects are included. The college intends to provide staff development to improve tutors' skills and awareness of the need to help learners achieve economic well-being and to raise consistency of the provision.

## Leadership and management

What progress has been made in the last year with the plans to relocate the college?

- The college has made good progress with these plans and has received LSC approval. If the college obtains planning permission and financial plans are successful, managers expect the new building to open in August 2009.

The last inspection report (January 2006) states that although divisions have correctly identified areas for development through self-assessment, targets in action plans are often imprecise and insufficiently related to whole college targets. What impact have actions to remedy these two issues had since the inspection?

- Managers have improved the target-setting process and the monitoring of action plans and reviews. Links and cross-references

between course reviews, divisional and college self-assessment reports and the post inspection plan are clear. Target setting is more consistent and coherent and relates to whole college targets.

What has been done to improve the use of data by governors and curriculum leaders in order to improve performance?

- The use of data by curriculum leaders is improving. Data are more accessible. Team leaders' skills in the use of data to set relevant targets are increasing. However, the college is to provide further support and development to team leaders to increase understanding, standards and consistency. Training for governors in the use of data to drive improvements is due in January. Governors have good access to data and those on the standards sub-committee interrogate managers on data issues and, as a result, request appropriate responses and actions.

Any other observations from the visit not identified in the pre-visit analysis:

- The post-inspection action plan is clear, detailed and comprehensive. It includes strengths to maintain as well as areas for improvement and it links to the college self-assessment report (SAR), divisional SARs and course reviews. Whilst most targets are specific, definite and precise, some refer to intentions rather than definite actions.