

ANNUAL ASSESSMENT VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Name of College: Wyggeston and Queen Elizabeth 1 College
Date of visit: 23 November 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

Success and retention rates for learners aged 16 to 18 were very high in 2004/05, whereas pass rates were close to the national average. How have these rates changed in 2005/06?

- The college sustained these high rates in 2005/06. Retention and success rates remained above national averages and were about the same in 2005/06 as in 2004/05. GCE AS and A level pass rates were close to the national averages.

How well did learners aged 16 to 18 achieve in 2005/06, compared with their prior attainment? In particular, how well did the most able learners achieve compared with their prior attainment? Why did the small number of learners on the 6 unit AVCE not achieve as well as expected in 2004/05?

- Most learners, including the most able, achieved well, compared with their prior attainments. Most exceeded their minimum expected target grades, based on their GCSE entry scores. The small number of learners on the AVCE single award in 2004/05 who did not achieve as well as expected had difficulties with their placement unit. However, learners on the same course in 2005/06 made relatively greater progress.

The proportion of enrolments in 2004/05 in 'other' provision was high. Has this reduced in 2005/06?

Most of the "other" provision is enrichment, which all learners must take. It has not reduced in 2005/06, because the uptake of enrichment is still high. It does not include any inappropriate provision.

What are the key skills success rates for 2005/06, by each key skill and each level? Have they improved compared with 2004/05 and are they at national averages?

- The college does not offer key skills at level 1. Pass rates at level 2 in communications and application of number are low, but have risen in 2005/06 compared with 2004/05. The learners taking these qualifications are part of the GCSE retake group and are few in number. However, about 400 learners each year take level 2 information and communication technology key skills and pass rates are well above national averages and improved in 2005/06 compared with 2004/05. At level 3, few learners take communications key skills, but the pass rate improved significantly between 2004/05 and 2005/06 and is above the national average.

Quality of education and training

How frequently do learners meet formally on a one-to-one basis with their tutors to monitor progress and set targets? Are these targets always specific and challenging?

- Learners meet formally for one-to-one reviews termly. The first review is after six weeks and involves each teacher's observation of the progress made by a learner, compared with her/his minimum expected grade (MEG). Each teacher agrees targets with the learner. The personal tutor provides an overview assessment of progress and sets targets. The second review is after the January assessments and the third is prior to the summer examination period. Tutors have time to do brief fortnightly one-to-one learner reviews. Most tutors set precise and challenging targets, but a minority of teachers' targets is vague. The college revisited the review process and increased its intensity, importance and urgency. Learners' perceptions of the review improved considerably.

Has the lesson observation system been extended to all areas of the college? Were all full-time and part-time teachers observed in 2005/06? Are tutorials and key skills lessons observed? Are there

any differences in the quality of teaching and learning in tutorials and key skills lessons compared with 'subject' lessons?

- The college has recently done much developmental work to produce a new lesson observation system, since it was concerned that it would not meet all its targets in 2005/06. The new process proposes to:
 - observe all (full-time and part-time) teachers and tutors annually
 - re-observe teachers with unsatisfactory observations
 - increase the proportion of observations completed by the University of Leicester (UoL)
 - ensure that each department uses the UoL observers biannually
 - align the internal observation process to that of the UoL to ensure consistency
 - raise the profile and use of observation outcomes in the self-assessment report (SAR)
 - link outcomes to performance targets
- Observers did not observe all teachers in 2005/06. The college does analyse the observation outcomes of key skill lessons and tutorials and they do not differ significantly from the overall profile.

Leadership and management

How much progress has been made since the last visit with the accommodation strategy?

- The college has made considerable progress with accommodation since the last visit. It has completed the £1 million project to improve access for people with restricted mobility. Three new lifts are in place and additional corridors have released pressure points and improved access to toilets. Two extra classrooms are in use. The alterations integrate well into the building, significantly improve access for people with restricted mobility and raise the standard of accommodation. The learning and skills council has approved the £8 million capital bid for new building and renovations. This will completely re-house art and design, performing arts, business and economics, renovate the science block and provide more private study areas and three classrooms. All

specialist areas will then be compliant with the requirements of the disability discrimination act.

What has been the impact of actions taken to improve the quality of key skills provision?

- The improvements in key skills pass rates are due to continuity of staff and actions taken because of advice from an external moderator. This enabled the college to improve portfolio completion rates such that the proportion of full awards in ICT improved by over 60% in 2005/06 compared with 2004/05.

What progress has been made to check and record staff identity, qualifications and criminal records?

- The college has made reasonable progress to meet the requirements of listing staff checks on identity, qualifications and criminal records. The college has requested enhanced criminal records bureau (CRB) disclosures on all staff (teaching and support) appointed since 2002. It demands that the appropriate procedures apply to all staff employed by contractors and agencies who work on college premises. The college has adjusted its recruitment procedures to comply with the requirements and does all it can to expedite clearance procedures and checks.

Does the latest self-assessment report (SAR) include judgements on the quality of the college's provision in the five 'every child matters' (ECM) aspects. How is the college developing these areas to meet learners' needs?

- The college has done much in the last year to raise the profile of the ECM outcomes and to integrate them into the SAR process at all levels. The development plan includes relevant references to the ECM aspects. Departmental SAR proforma direct staff to evaluate and judge the effectiveness of their ECM provision. Relevant outcomes from learners' surveys provide evidence for judgements on ECM matters. Many areas of the large enrichment programme and the international baccalaureate creativity, action and service section support the ECM aims. The college has not compared the ECM criteria with the content of its general tutorial programme.

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

- The college started the international baccalaureate (IB) course in September 2006 with 33 learners and aims for between 60 and 70 learners in 2007/08. Links with other IB providers and peer-referencing colleges have been mutually supportive. Whilst two subjects were not viable and some groups are small, most learners obtained their main choices. They have produced high quality information and marketing materials for prospective IB learners. The IB course integrates well with the rest of the college and its quality assurance system. Most learners are progressing well and benefit from a very wide range of creativity, action and service options.