

ANNUAL ASSESSMENT VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Name of College: Long Road Sixth Form College
Date of visit: 16 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

Current achievement and standards

- Overall success rates improved in 2005/06. Although pass rates remained close to their 2004/05 levels for GCE AS and A level subjects, retention rates improved and more learners completed their courses successfully. GCE A level success rates are now close to the average for sixth form colleges whereas GCE AS level success rates are slightly below the national average. Value-added data reveal that these success rates represent good achievements for the learners, given their starting points. The college remains in the top 10% of colleges nationally, based on ALPS data. The percentage of high grades is satisfactory. Success rates on GCSE courses have improved significantly and are now well above the national average. The overall success rates conceal significant differences between departments and individual courses. Success rates on courses in the business studies department have improved slightly, but remain satisfactory overall.

Quality of provision

Attendance and punctuality

- Attendance improved to 86% in 2005/06, contributing to the overall improvement in retention.
- The college has made no progress in monitoring and improving learner punctuality and the weakness persists. Procedures for reporting lateness are confusing and ineffective. Heads of department and teachers do not provide sufficient challenge to learners who are late to lessons.

Leadership and management

Quality assurance

- Quality assurance procedures are being implemented more consistently across the college. Departmental self-assessment reports are much more self-critical and provide a secure base for departmental development plans.
- The college's lesson observation procedures have been refined to ensure that judgements on the quality of teaching and learning are both more accurate and more consistent between departments. Observations now enable managers to make a well considered evaluation of teaching and learning, and provide for more robust judgements in departmental self-assessment reports.

Organisational review

- The college is proceeding with a comprehensive review of organisational structures within the college. A consultation document has recently been circulated to all staff.

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

- Long Road Sixth Form College is oversubscribed and current projections are for continuing growth in the 16 -19 age group within Cambridge and its hinterland. It is not clear how the college will be able to respond to the challenge of increasing learner numbers, or the role that it will play in 14-19 developments within the city.