

## ANNUAL ASSESSMENT VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Name of College: Newham Sixth Form College  
Date of visit: 28 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

Nationally verified success data for 2005/06 was not available at the time of this visit. Judgements have therefore been based on college data supplied during the visit.

How well do students achieve on AS courses?

- In 2004/05, standards on AS courses were below the national average for sixth form colleges in areas of high social deprivation, although value added data indicate that students made satisfactory progress at this level. In 2005/06, there has been a significant overall improvement in success rates at AS level by 7 percentage points.

How well do students achieve at level 2 and on work based learning courses?

- Success rates at level 2, identified in the 2004 inspection report as a concern, have increased from 66% in 2002/03 to 80% in 2005/06. Exam entries have increased by 25% over the same period.
- At the time of the last inspection, achievement on work based learning courses was low. Whilst demonstrating some improvement since then, work based learning provision is being discontinued and existing students will complete their courses by March 2007. The college is currently considering alternative provision to meet the needs of similar groups of learners.

How well do students achieve in ICT?

- Student performance in ICT has improved. For example, high success rates were achieved in GNVQ Intermediate ICT and in the national diploma for IT practitioners. Success rates for AS level ICT rose from a low base by 24 percentage points at the time of the last inspection to 68% last year, however, achievement on GCE A level computing remains low.

## Quality of education and training

What mechanisms are the college using to drive further improvements in the quality of teaching and learning?

- Teaching and learning was judged as good at the last inspection. In September 2005, the college introduced advanced teaching practitioners (ATPs) as one strategy to improve the quality of teaching and learning. ATPs work with both individual teachers and teams, focusing on enhancing teaching and learning in the classroom. Teachers report some significant benefits citing the more varied use of learning activities, the value of professional dialogue and increased opportunities to share and disseminate ideas across different subject areas. ATPs have been part of the college's strategies to secure improvements at AS level. Other strategies include increased student feedback, the development of team guarantees and specific continuous professional development that seeks to identify reasons for relative under-performance at AS. This has resulted in a clear focus on increased support for transition from GCSE, developing study skills, subject specific skills and language needed to enable learners to make fast progress at AS level.
- The college has recently taken steps to improve the rigour of its lesson observation process, with moderation training for managers and draft guidance for observation feedback.

How effectively is the student tracking system being used to support learner achievement?

- At the time of the last annual assessment visit, the college had recently introduced a new student tracking system. The student tracker provides pertinent information relating to individual's attendance and achievement. It is an effective communication tool, with students reporting that both they and their tutors monitor their performance regularly through the tracker. Teachers value the improved communication through the e-mail system and the early warning system for students who are causing concern. There has been greater consistency in its application and monitoring by managers this

year to ensure compliance; however, the college recognises that the full potential of the system has not yet been realised. For example, teachers reported that they would like to be able to weight the assessed work recorded so that a more accurate picture of student performance could be created and some indicated they would like to be able to view all tutor feedback.

## Leadership and management

How effectively are targets used in the self-assessment process to ensure quality improvement?

- The college information team have implemented some changes and faculties now report that they have better access to more accurate data, for example, through the pre-populated performance report. This has resulted in a greater awareness of patterns in achievement at course and faculty level and has strengthened the quality improvement process. The quality of targets set in action plans is reviewed to ensure improvement is sufficiently focused.
- At the last inspection, the college did not set targets at AS level. The college now sets a target for AS level courses overall, but not for specific courses. Targets are set based on national averages, using internal college data where appropriate.

Any themes from the pre-visit analysis not explored during the visit:

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

The college has recently introduced the HEadway programme that enables a limited number of students who were not successful at AS level in science, humanities and business to continue their studies and progress to university.