

## ANNUAL ASSESSMENT VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Name of College: St Vincent  
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

Do the provisional results for 2005/06 indicate sustained improvement?

- Due to the nature of the college curriculum, not all results for 2005/06 are yet recorded on the database. Therefore, the detail below represents a "worst case" scenario and is likely to improve, especially with regard to courses for learners aged over 19, when further results are available.
- The data problem identified at the last AAV has been resolved. The success rate on level 1 courses for learners aged 16-18 rose to 71% in 2005/06 which is slightly above the 2004/05 national average. Success rates on level 2 courses also improved to 71%. There was a slight decline to 71% in the success rate on level 3 courses for learners aged 16-18.
- It is too early to judge the performance of most courses for adult learners as many results have not yet been analysed.

Have GCE AS results and achievement compared with prior attainment for students aged 16-18 improved?

- Analysis by the college reveals that the main concerns are on AS level courses where the pass rate is 83%. The pass rate of 97% on GCE A level courses remains high. Overall the achievement of learners compared with their prior attainment improved in 2005/06 to a residual of -0.12 from -0.20 in 2004/05. Whilst this is still statistically significantly negative, there are some notable examples of good and very good performance. For example, history, classical civilisation and music technology perform consistently well at AS level and GCE A level.
- The college is aware of the courses that did not perform well in 2005/06 and is taking appropriate action. (See leadership and management below)

## Quality of education and training

How successful is the provision for pupils aged 14-16? Are pupils engaged well and do the programmes have good outcomes?

- The college has a very innovative and successful programme of courses for pupils aged 14-16 from local schools. This includes sport and recreation, childcare, carpentry and joinery and AS level critical thinking for gifted and talented pupils in years 10 and 11. Modern foreign language courses are also provided for pupils who have completed their GCSE early. The college also supports partner schools in establishing their applied GCSE courses. A small number of pupils attend the college to follow a bespoke curriculum to meet their individual needs. The outcomes from the college's provision for pupils aged 14-16 are generally good. The progression rate from the sports course onto higher level college courses and/or related employment is very high.

What are the benefits of links with primary schools? Are they developing well?

- The college's links with primary schools are outstanding. There are links in sport, drama, art and science as well as a book club for children of primary school age. Primary schools also benefit from the use of the college facilities, including the very good sports facilities and swimming pool. Last year about 100 college students worked with pupils from primary schools on the Community Sports Leaders Award (CSLA) programme, performing arts students worked with over 80 children on a major Shakespeare project and around 30 pupils worked with art students and staff on wall hangings for the school's "African Week". Plans are well advanced for the delivery of an enterprise project with Key Stage 2 primary pupils.

Has the college maintained the high levels of academic and pastoral support found at the last inspection?

- Pastoral guidance and support are comprehensive and effective. At a meeting with inspectors, a sample of students was extremely positive about the support they receive from the college. They also found the atmosphere in the college to be very friendly and welcoming to all and they appreciated the college seeking their opinions on college life and taking action where possible. Students confirmed that the college monitors their attendance extremely rigorously but there was some confusion about how the college monitored their progress on courses.

Some in the sample thought that the formal reviews of progress were too infrequent.

- Careers guidance and education is structured well and meets the needs of students who wish to enter employment as well as those going on to higher education. There is a well resourced careers library and students benefited from a very successful careers fair earlier this term. Student Support Officers (SSOs) are allocated to faculties and work closely and effectively with tutors and the Student Welfare Officer to identify any potential problems students may be experiencing. The range of student support services is comprehensive and managers have adapted services appropriately to meet the needs of adult students.

How is the effectiveness of additional learning support evaluated?

- The provision of additional learning support is good. Systems are clear, comprehensive and understood well by students, who value greatly the support they receive. Again, managers have adapted procedures appropriately to cater for adults. There is good liaison with feeder schools about students' additional needs. Initial diagnostic work is thorough and staff provide support in ways that best meet an individual student's identified needs. Key skills are integrated effectively into learning support. Whilst the college evaluates the effectiveness of additional learning support by comparisons between a student's actual performance and their predicted grade, no formal evaluation is carried out to assess the impact on retention and success rates.

Has the college maintained its development of the ECM outcomes?

- The college has completed further work in the promotion of the five outcomes of "Every Child Matters". An audit of each department's input to the outcomes has been carried out and evaluated. From the resulting action plan, an innovative programme of activities has been devised which includes, for example, an enterprise event, charities week and anti-racism activities. These activities are to be delivered through the tutorial programme. At the time of the visit, it was too early to judge whether this method of delivery was successful. The wide range of sport-related enrichment activities plays a major part in helping students maintain a healthy lifestyle, as does the college's promotion of cycling through the provision of good quality cycle storage. The group of students who met with inspectors were unanimous in stating that they all felt very safe at St Vincent College. Some felt that there was not enough healthy food

available in the cafeteria, which they reported was also very crowded at peak times.

## Leadership and management

What is the college's role in the local 14-19 strategy?

- The college plays a key role in the area's local 14-19 strategy. It makes a major contribution to the Fareham and Gosport Consortium and also to the success of the Increased Flexibility programme for pupils aged 14-16. Plans are developing with other partners for the introduction of Specialist Diplomas. The college reviews its curriculum regularly and thoroughly, taking due account of the needs of the diverse community it serves.

Have managers taken appropriate action to address any areas of under-performance?

- In most cases leaders and managers have taken appropriate management action to address poor performance on identified courses. The college has restructured course and curriculum management in a number of instances. The formal evaluations of courses through the Post-Validation Review process have been successful in improving outcomes, for example, in GCE A level psychology. Senior managers are very clear about where attention needs to be focused and they have a detailed action plan for this academic year. The practice of students taking an additional AS level in their second year is not always successful and may have a detrimental effect on the overall success rate on AS level courses.

Have there been improvements in health and care provision?

- It is too early to judge as to whether or not significant improvements have been made although there are some positive indications. The college has appointed a new head of department and has carried out a fundamental review of the curriculum successfully.

What is the current position regarding the SAR for 2005/06?

- The self-assessment report and the procedures for its production are embedded well at St Vincent College and the final validation is scheduled for November 2006, prior to approval by governors in early 2007.

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

- No

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

- The college continues to manage its diverse and complex estate very effectively and there is a visionary plan for its continuous improvement. The new dance and drama facilities are impressive and the estate and buildings are clean and tidy.