

## ANNUAL ASSESSMENT VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Name of College: Franklin College  
Date of visit: 11 January 2007

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

Average GCSE point scores on entry to the college are low in comparison with similar colleges; in 2006/07 the average is 5.29 for level 3 learners.

How well did learners achieve in 2005/06?

- Overall success rates for learners aged 16 to 18 are 76%, just below the national average. Numbers increased by almost 16% in the last two years. The success rate has remained constant as the national average has increased. In 2005/06 the success rate at level 3 was 76.5%, adversely affected by lower than expected performance by the cohort taking AS-level general studies. Without AS general studies, the success rate was 81%.
- For adult students, success rates are well above national average at level 3 and around the national average at level 2. At level 1, where the provision has been changed in response to government initiatives, success rates, including those on ESOL courses are low. Achievements are better in literacy and numeracy; for example, success rates in literacy are high at 74%.
- Students on vocational courses at level 2 and level 3 are achieving well, although their numbers are relatively small. The success rate improved to 84% at level 3 with excellent high grade achievement at 92%. At level 2, the vocational success rate was 78% with over half the learners achieving high grades. The GCSE success rate improved to 80%. The higher grade pass rate at GCSE was 58%. For learners taking GCSE mathematics and English, achievement at A\*-C was satisfactory at 54% and 59% respectively.

What does value added data indicate about performance in 2006?

- Learners make significantly better progress than expected compared with their former attainment. At institutional level, 'value added' data has been very positive over the last four years and places the college in the top 20% of participating institutions under the advanced level information system (ALIS) and top 10% under the advanced level performance system

(ALPS). Average points score per student was 878.5 in 2005/06, compared to the national average of 721.5.

- Learners perform particularly well at GCE A level, where five subjects have the highest value added scores in the country under ALPS. Results have been consistently high in recent years in accounting, fine art, chemistry, English language and English language and literature, graphics, music technology, music, photography and psychology, sociology, and health and social care.
- At AS level there is more variation between subjects. Sociology, psychology, government and politics, fine art, photography, graphics, chemistry, English language and geography have performed particularly well; whereas there is some underperformance in biology, physics, French, economics, and design technology. Teachers are taking appropriate action in these subjects to bring about improvement. Most learners taking vocational courses are doing well, particularly in health and social care.

## Quality of education and training

What progress has been made since the last AAV in developing teaching and learning?

- Teachers have received training in carrying out 'peer' observations of lessons and to raise their awareness of the themes of Every Child Matters (ECM) and how they can be promoted in their subjects. A stronger awareness of the subject leadership role and its potential is developing at curriculum level. Teachers feel their teaching and subject expertise are well supported through continuing professional development. The college is strongly encouraging of a wide range of overseas and domestic visits to enrich students' learning experience and broaden their outlook.

What are the current views of learners about the college?

- Learners are very positive about the college. They find subject teachers and tutors to be very helpful and approachable and they describe lessons as 'quite fun'. Learners feel that the atmosphere encourages them to work hard in class, although some say that they find some of their work a challenge compared with their earlier experiences. Subject support is perceived to be good. Learners appreciate the opportunities provided to go into higher education. A few find the timetable on certain days is too heavily scheduled. Some learners feel better communication is needed to raise awareness about student union activities.

## Leadership and management

How is the college responding to external partners?

- Recently college managers responded swiftly to the local authority (LA) request to ensure continuity of provision for sixth formers in a local school. The college is involved closely in discussions with all key partners in the area in determining the future configuration of provision. The college is highly responsive to local needs by, for example, supporting local schools in mathematics and 14 to 19 project work and in providing literacy and numeracy courses for vulnerable adults.

What progress has been made since the last AAV?

- The college has made good progress since the last AAV in improving retention at level 2 and maintaining high achievement on GCE A-level and on vocational courses at levels 2 and 3. Value added has remained high.

What actions have been taken to improve subject performance?

- Where performance in some AS-level subjects is too low, relevant staff have identified the reasons and are taking appropriate actions to ensure better outcomes.

How effective is self assessment?

- The college judges its overall effectiveness to be good. Senior and middle managers are effective leaders who identify clearly what needs to be done to maintain standards. The self-assessment report identifies the continued need to raise standards and also to meet external priorities.
- The format of the draft 2005/06 SAR is easy to follow and the summary context is helpful in understanding new strategic developments. The impact of the development plan for 2005/06 is evaluated concisely. Arrangements to keep governors informed of curriculum developments have been reviewed and they receive strategic briefings from curriculum managers.
- The college considers itself to be a good college and grades itself as good against all key questions and aspects of the framework. The identification, within the SAR, of those key strengths and areas for improvement which fell within the scope of the AAV were encountered during this visit.
- Curriculum SARs indicate that 3 areas are considered outstanding, 10 are judged to be good and 6 are judged to be satisfactory. Each section of the curriculum SAR has a useful context summary and risk evaluation with priorities for improvement. Staff are appropriately involved in the process and are focussed on ensuring that learners do as well as possible. The impact of actions taken by course managers is not always evaluated consistently at this level and there is more scope for the sharing of good practice in learning strategies.

Does the college comply with the latest requirements for child protection?

- The college has implemented the latest guidance for child protection, with a central record.

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

- The new building for art and design and photography is well advanced.
- The college is working closely with key partners in planning for a new learning campus involving a nearby 11 to 16 school and the Grimsby Institute of Further and Higher Education. Discussions are taking place on the curriculum offer
- Problems encountered in 2005/06 with new software on the management information system are now being resolved. Staff are finding reports more 'timely', making it easier for them to monitor and keep track of learners' progress.