

RE-INSPECTION MONITORING OF ST BRENDAN'S SIXTH FORM COLLEGE

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Outcome of Re-Inspection Monitoring

The overall provision in science is now **satisfactory**.

Background

St Brendan's Sixth Form College was inspected in December 2001. Inspectors from the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) and the Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) carried out the inspection under Section 62 of the Learning and Skills Act. The quality of provision was found to be satisfactory in all areas inspected, except in science, which was found to be unsatisfactory.

Ofsted and the ALI have particular duties in relation to colleges where their inspection report indicates that individual curriculum and/or work-based learning (WBL) areas are unsatisfactory or very weak or that leadership and management are unsatisfactory or very weak. Where a college has been judged to have less than satisfactory provision in any curriculum or WBL area, or less than satisfactory leadership and management, Ofsted or the ALI will visit the college to carry out monitoring inspections of the unsatisfactory areas.

As a result of the re-inspection monitoring visits, inspectors may judge that the curriculum or WBL areas, or leadership and management are satisfactory and that no further visits are required. If, after approximately 24 months, the college has not made sufficient progress to justify a judgement that the curriculum or WBL area or leadership and management are satisfactory, the original grade for the area that continues to be unsatisfactory will remain on the college's record until the next full inspection within the cycle. Ofsted will inform the local LSC that provision remains unsatisfactory and the reasons why.

Date of the Re-Inspection Monitoring Visits

In accordance with the above procedures, re-inspection monitoring visits of science took place on 13-14 November 2002, 8-9 April 2003, and 12-13 November 2003.

Science

In the December 2001 inspection, the quality of overall provision in this area was judged to be unsatisfactory. The following strengths and weaknesses were identified in the inspection report:

Strengths

- Strong support for students from subject teachers
- Carefully-planned and well-organised curriculum
- Good resources and technical support
- Good accommodation.

Weaknesses

- Low retention rates
- Low pass rates
- Much unimaginative teaching
- Little opportunity for students to express themselves in lessons
- Too little attention to the effectiveness of teaching and learning in course reviews.

Following the re-inspection monitoring visits, inspectors judged that progress has been made in addressing the above weaknesses and that overall provision in this area is now **satisfactory**.

There was a marked improvement in pass rates. They are all now at or above the national average. Overall, retention rates in biology and physics AS and A2 are at the national average for sixth form colleges. The retention rates are marginally below average on chemistry courses, but lower on the GCSE physiology and health course. No teaching or learning was judged less than satisfactory on this final or the previous visit. Teachers provide an appropriate variety of activities to maintain students' interest. They test students' understanding and aim to involve all students in the lesson. The teaching grade profile has improved significantly. No teaching or learning was judged less than satisfactory on this final or the previous visit.

Students are confident and they are able to discuss topics freely and intelligently. Course reviews have been strengthened and data and value added measures are being used appropriately in arriving at judgements and setting an agenda for action. The overall management of the area has

improved. Students' attendance at lessons observed has improved from 86% in November 2002 to 93% in November 2003. The lesson observation system has been re-designed and it is implemented more consistently, but it is not yet always applied with sufficient rigour.

There will be no further monitoring visits to the college because there are no remaining unsatisfactory areas.

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