

ANNUAL ASSESSMENT VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Name of College: Greenhead College
Date of visit: 3 May 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

Have high success rates been maintained in the academic year ending August 2006?

- Overall success rates remain very high. GCE A level pass and retention rates are impressively above national averages. Learners make excellent progress with most achieving better results than those predicted by their prior attainment. Pass rates are consistently above average across all courses.

Is the attendance by different groups monitored and are there any significant differences between groups?

- Attendance of students is monitored closely. Effective analysis is carried out to look for patterns and ensure that high levels of attendance are maintained. Analysis is carried out on a number of levels, including by student, by individual learner and by teacher. It has been identified that early intervention is a key criteria for improvement and particular attention is paid to ensuring support is given promptly. Teachers and managers share responsibility for attendance monitoring and effective individual interviews with learners often result in improved attendance.

What are the success rates of new courses?

- Success rates on new courses are consistently above average. They are particularly high in Applied Science.

Quality of education and training

What impact have the new arrangements for identifying learners with specific educational needs had?

- The arrangements for identifying learners with specific educational needs are now well embedded into the everyday work of teachers and support staff. The impact has been to increase the profile of the service and more

learners are coming forward for help, particularly with examination arrangements.

Has the screening process and subsequent support had a positive impact on outcomes?

- The college arrangements for identifying learners with specific learning difficulties and other needs are comprehensive. All first year learners are screened and close attention is paid to previous support offered in schools to ensure that transition arrangements are effective. The learning support co-ordinator visits feeder schools frequently to get to know prospective learners and their support needs. Last year 32 learners were identified as having high level support needs and all took up the offer of support. Although the standards achieved by learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are generally high, the college does not utilise fully the value-added system to measure the progress of this group compared to other learners.

Is the disability guidance handbook a useful document that leads to improvement?

- The college introduced a disability equality scheme in 2006 which meets legislative requirements. The disability statement was re-written and induction for learners modified to make the college a more welcoming place. Governors receive thorough reports on equality and diversity issues. The disability guidance handbook has been expanded and forms a very useful resource that staff can access to enable them to understand disability issues and improve their teaching. A method of monitoring the frequency of use of the handbook has recently been introduced; however it is too early to measure the impact on the quality of teaching and learning.

Leadership and management

What has been the college response to ECM?

- The college has responded well to the 'Every Child Matters' agenda. With particular reference to "Being Healthy" - the college insists that all learners participate in at least one enrichment activity. Participation levels in sporting activities are high and college teams are successful. An all-weather sports pitch is being constructed. There are effective arrangements in place to support learners' mental health. Healthy food options are available in the cafeteria although some learners believe the

variety of foods could be increased and further work should be done to promote the benefits of healthy eating. The college policy on smoking is currently being reviewed and plans are in place to extend the support offered to learners who smoke.

What are current arrangements to monitor equality particularly in relation to recruitment (including staff recruitment)?

- Learner applications have been benchmarked against local authority and feeder school populations and have been found to be broadly equivalent in terms of ethnicity and gender. The number of learners from minority ethnic groups has increased slightly in the last year. There are no significant differences in the achievements of minority ethnic groups compared to the rest of the college population. The college has reviewed its arrangements to attract teachers from minority ethnic backgrounds and continues to work hard to ensure staff are representative of the local community.

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

- None

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

- Ofsted subject survey carried out in subject skills area 2 (Science) in October 2006 concluded that this area of work had many strengths and achievement and standards in science overall were outstanding.
- This letter has been forwarded to the HMI in the Learning and Skills division responsible for collating examples of good practice with a view to him contacting the college.