



## ANNUAL ASSESSMENT VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Name of College: Wilberforce College  
Date of visit: 27 June 2007

This feedback contains brief findings from the annual assessment visit (AAV). 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

The visit explored students' success rates and progress, and the extent to which these are reflected in the college's self-assessment report (SAR).

Learners aged 16 to 18:

- The progress made by GCE A-level learners with respect to their attainment at GCSE has improved markedly and was outstanding in 2006. The progress made by AS learners fluctuates from year to year but is at least satisfactory. In 2006 it was good.
- The GCE A-level success and pass rates are high. The success rate has been close to the sixth form college national average for several years. In 2006 the rate fell slightly but is close to the national rate when this is adjusted to reflect the courses and enrolments at the college. The AS-level success rate is low compared with the national rate. When the effect of low success in general studies is removed from the college rate the college success rate is close to a similarly adjusted national average.
- The success rates on the first diploma and on the introductory certificate courses are satisfactory. Pass and higher grade pass rates are high.
- Learner retention in the current year is predicted to be similar to that for 2005/06.
- The SAR provides a detailed analysis of learners' achievements and standards. The SAR judgements broadly accord with the above analysis.

### Quality of education and training

The last inspection and the previous Annual Assessment Visit (AAV) identified areas for improvement in the internal lesson observation system. The visit explored progress.

- The analysis of the quality of individual lessons and the recording of the strengths and areas for improvement have improved. In most of the completed lesson observation proforma perused, the focus on judgements and on the quality of learning is much more pronounced. In a few cases the areas to improve were not clearly linked to the judgements on the quality of teaching and learning.
- The college's teaching and learning grade profile indicates that there is very little unsatisfactory teaching and most of the teaching is good or better.
- The outcomes of lesson observation and learner achievements inform appropriately the staff performance management process and professional development.
- The extent to which the outcomes of these observations inform the self-assessment report on the quality of teaching is variable. In some curriculum areas, such as psychology/sociology, the analysis of which aspects of teaching are strengths or weaknesses is detailed. It is much less so for the college as whole.

The last inspection said that work was needed in sharing good practice between and within curriculum areas. The previous AAV report noted improvements in this area. The visit explored progress.

- Good practice is shared appropriately and in many ways:
  - College training weeks bring teachers from different subject areas together to explore teaching and learning strategies
  - Peer observation is now formalised and promotes sharing and improvement
  - Teaching and learning teams and subject learning coaches help to spread good practice, and subject base rooms for teachers are also beneficial in helping teachers and managers to work together.
  - Through the use of the virtual learning environment to store and disseminate learning materials
  - Through the inclusion of the heads of department to the lesson observation team.

The SAR makes positive reference to the college's work with schools. The visit explored some of this work.

- The college works extensively with schools. For example, some college learners act as mentors to pupils in schools at Key Stage 4 and also in some primary schools. Sports students undertake coaching activity in

schools. The college's development of its level 1 and 2 provision is built on consultation with local schools. Holiday revision classes and the teaching of, for example, AS mathematics to school pupils takes place. The college is a prominent partner in 14 to 19 developments.

The visit explored the views of learners on the quality of the provision

- Students are very positive about the quality of the teaching and the way their progress is monitored. This is most marked in the subjects where teaching involves them actively in the learning, tests them frequently to check their understanding and provides booklets of notes and exercises. They are less positive where teaching includes too little practical work, requires a lot of note taking, and does not provide the above booklets.
- Students feel that their views are listened to and that action takes place where necessary.

Key skills provision is judged to be satisfactory in the SAR. The visit explored the way it is provided.

- Much of the level 2 key skills provision is delivered through GCSEs in mathematics and English. Higher grade pass rates are satisfactory in English and below average in mathematics. Changes are being implemented to improve results, for example, by streaming learners more effectively. Information technology key skills have been integrated successfully into the first diploma courses and success rates in 2006/07 were high. Low success rates in communications at level 3 are being addressed by enabling learners to start their portfolios in their AS year and continue with them into year 2 where needed.

## Leadership and management

Management structures and personnel have changed and a set of values and behaviours established. The college is pursuing a policy of expanding its work at levels 1 and 2. The visit explored the views of staff on the management of these changes.

- Staff are very positive about the effectiveness of communication, are fully aware of the reasoning behind the changes, and are supportive of them and of the way they are being implemented. They feel that they are well supported by, for example, professional development and that senior

managers are approachable. New teachers commented positively about their induction.

- The college has a substantial and growing provision at levels 1 and 2. This is providing much improved progression opportunities into the college and through it. College data shows that a good proportion of learners progresses from level 1 to 2 and from level 2 to 3.

The visit explored progress made on the areas for improvement noted at the last inspection.

- Good progress has been made in addressing the areas for improvement.
- Improvements to the estate have been continuous and are providing much improved learning environments and facilities for learners.

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

- Recruitment remains buoyant, with steady growth of around 10% per year. Recruitment of learners to level 1 and level 2 programmes is increasing significantly.
- A wide range of enrichment activities is provided for learners. In addition to the comprehensive range of subject enrichment noted at the last inspection the SAR notes the summer term enrichment week. This offers a wide range of subject enrichment activities and also activities around the theme "Wilberforce week" commemorating the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the passing of the Abolition of the Slave Trade Act.
- The college's sports teams, which operate in many different sports, regularly achieve excellent success in college sports competitions.
- Management information is accurate and readily accessible, and its provision is responsive to need.