

ANNUAL ASSESSMENT VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Name of College: SEEVIC College
Date of visit: 9 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

How well do learners achieve?

- SEEVIC College is a sixth form college and learner achievements are compared to national averages for sixth form colleges. The college has more adult learners and a wider range of courses at levels 1 and 2 than is typical for sixth form colleges.
- The overall college success rate for long courses improved by 7% between 2002/03 and 2004/05, compared with an increase in the national average of 3% over the same period. In 2004/05 the overall college success rate was 76%, slightly below the national average of 79%. The overall college success rate improved by 6% in 2005/06 to 82%.
- The overall success rate for 16-18 year olds (around 88% of all learners) on long courses in 2004/05 was 77% which was slightly below the national average of 81%. The college success rate improved by 5% in 2005/06 to 82%.
- The overall success rate for adults (around 12% of all learners) on long courses in 2004/05 was 64% which was significantly above the national average of 57%. The college success rate improved by 1% in 2005/06 to 65%.
- Advanced Level Performance System (ALPS) value-added indicators suggest that most learners on AS courses achieve very well and most on A2 courses achieve in line with expectations based on their prior attainment. ALPS data indicates an improvement in the proportion of AS courses judged to be at least satisfactory, increasing by 16% compared to 2004/05. The proportion of A2 courses judged to be at least satisfactory declined slightly by 2% compared to 2004/05.

Quality of education and training

What action has the college taken to improve the quality of teaching and learning? In particular, what is the college doing to ensure that teaching meets the needs of all learners? What has been the impact of actions to improve teaching and learning?

- All full-time and virtually all part-time teachers are observed annually. Additional observations take place for newly qualified teachers and those who are working towards teaching qualifications. The scope of observations has broadened recently to include reviews of lesson planning and assessment. Peer observations are also used within curriculum areas to aid quality improvement.
- If a lesson is graded as inadequate, the teacher is offered additional support and is re-observed within a month. All observations result in action points for improvement which are monitored by line managers. In some cases these action points are not recorded in sufficient detail to focus the teacher on how to improve or to permit analysis to inform future training needs within the college.
- The college has previously recognised that more needed to be done to ensure that teaching meets the needs of all learners. In order to try to address this issue, the college has broadened the curriculum to provide a greater range of courses, provided additional training for teaching staff and made differentiation a focus of internal observations of teaching and learning. In addition, the college has implemented a project to increase the proportion of outstanding and very good teaching and learning. This project has involved reflecting on the features of outstanding teaching and sharing best practice within and across curriculum teams.
- According to the college internal observation system the proportion of good or better teaching and learning increased by 5% in 2005/06 to 77%. This figure has further increased in 2006/07 and currently stands at 82%.

How has the college enhanced the quality of assessment, progress monitoring and action-planning to improve the performance of learners?

- The college has a clear view that the role of tutorials is to support learning.

- Teachers record predicted grades for every learner each half-term. This information, together with attendance data and an indicator of the effort made by each learner, is reviewed by personal tutors and compared to minimum target grades. All learners are set targets for improvement. Good performance is recognised and praised by staff. Underperformance is analysed and an action plan for improvement is drawn up following consultation by the personal tutor with senior tutors and teaching staff.
- The tutorial process is under review and several changes are planned for 2007/08. These include more regular individual tutorials and the implementation of an electronic individual learning plan (e-ILP). The e-ILP is being piloted in the current year and staff are being trained in its use. It has the capacity to act as a highly useful central store of information about learners' performance and targets for improvement. The e-ILP also has links with provision for additional learning needs and can facilitate internal communications between teachers, tutors, learners, support staff and managers.

What evidence is there to support the college's view that additional learning support is a key strength? What is being done to further improve the effectiveness of additional learning support?

- The college makes good use of its links with schools and the application and enrolment process to obtain a wide range of evidence about the additional support needs of learners.
- Learners who have not achieved a grade C in GCSE English and Mathematics undertake a diagnostic test of their literacy and/or numeracy skills during induction. Learners may also refer themselves, or be referred by teaching staff, if problems are encountered with literacy and numeracy. Learners with support needs are provided with a separate individual learning plan (ILP) detailing these needs. These ILPs are used to inform teachers about strategies to support individual learners.
- Additional learning support may be provided by support staff working within lessons and through individual support sessions.
- In 2005/06, the retention and achievement rates of learners receiving additional support were broadly similar to those for the college as a whole.
- Learners who are underperforming on their programmes are referred to a six-week Learning Challenge course which aims to improve their study skills. Around 10% of learners participated on this course in 2005/06.

Plans are in place to analyse the impact of this course on the performance of learners.

- There are currently few quantitative performance indicators being used to evaluate fully the impact of learner support on the development of key skills and on retention and achievement rates.

Leadership and management

No themes explored