



King George V College

Inspection Report 2-3 May 2007

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Background information

Inspection judgements

Grading

Inspectors use a four-point scale to summarise their judgements about achievement and standards, the quality of provision, and leadership and management, which includes a grade for equality of opportunity.

The descriptors for the four grades are:

- *grade 1 – outstanding*
- *grade 2 – good*
- *grade 3 – satisfactory*
- *grade 4 – inadequate*

Further information can be found on how inspection judgements are made at www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Scope of the inspection

In deciding the scope of this inspection, inspectors took account of; the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans; comments from the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC) or other funding body; and where appropriate the previous inspection report (www.ofsted.gov.uk); reports from the inspectorate annual assessment visits or quality monitoring inspection; and data on learners and their achievements over the period since the last inspection. This inspection focused on the following aspects:

- overall effectiveness of the organisation and its capacity to improve further
- achievements and standards
- quality of provision
- leadership and management

Description of the provider

1. King George V College is a sixth form college, established in 1978, located in a largely residential area close to the centre of Southport and within the Sefton authority. There is little manufacturing industry in the area. Many local people commute to work, particularly to Liverpool. General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) results at 16 are close to the national average. Since incorporation in 1993, the college has extended its catchment area and widened the range of programmes it offers. The college now draws students from a radius of 15 miles. There is a general further education (FE) college two miles away and a tertiary college in south Sefton; there are plans for a new sixth form centre in the south of the borough. The college works in collaboration with the other FE and secondary providers in the area, particularly in the context of specialised diplomas. In 2005/06 there were 1,393 full-time students aged 16 to 18, plus 545 part-time adult students. Students aged 16 to 18 account for 90% of the total enrolments and 93% of full-time equivalent students. For 16 to 18 year olds, 94% of enrolments were at level 3. For adult students, 65% of enrolments were at level 1, 26% at level 2 and 9% at level 3.

Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision	Outstanding: Grade 1
Capacity to improve	Outstanding: Grade 1
Achievements and standards	Good: Grade 2
Quality of provision	Outstanding: Grade 1
Leadership and management	Outstanding: Grade 1
<i>Equality of opportunity</i>	<i>Outstanding: Contributory Grade1</i>

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Outstanding: Grade 1

2. Overall effectiveness is outstanding. The college demonstrates a strong commitment to inclusion. General Certificate of Education (GCE) A level pass rates are very high. Retention is high. The progress made by students taking these subjects is good and improving. Progression to higher education for level 3 students and to level 3 courses for level 2 students is high. Teaching and learning are rigorously monitored and are good. Students receive outstanding support and the promotion of equality of opportunity is excellent. Students can choose from a wide range of academic courses and a good range of vocational courses at levels 2 and 3. Their studies are supplemented by an extensive range of enrichment opportunities. However, students are not always committed to achieving the additional qualifications provided and this depresses overall success rates. Leadership and management are outstanding. The college knows its strengths and weaknesses and has good arrangements to continuously improve its provision. Information systems, tailored to the college's needs, enable students' progress to be closely monitored and enhance the support provided. The college is strong financially and provides good value for money.

Capacity to improve

Outstanding: Grade 1

3. The college's capacity to improve is outstanding. It sets itself challenging yet realistic targets for improvement and has succeeded in improving its performance steadily over recent years, for example, in the pass rates and progress made by students on GCE A level courses. Quality assurance procedures are operated rigorously. Management information is accurate, readily accessible and useful. Managers have a good understanding of the college's strengths and areas for improvement. Most areas for improvement identified by inspectors had already been recognised and targeted by college managers. Staff development opportunities are extensive and focus appropriately on teaching and learning. The evaluation of some aspects of college performance, such as the quality of teaching and learning and the curriculum range, are underdeveloped in the self-assessment report (SAR).

The effectiveness of the steps taken by the college to promote improvement since the last inspection

4. Good progress has been made in improving the areas for development identified at the last inspection. Good practice is now more routinely shared between teaching teams, although not all departments are as effective in this respect. The outcomes of internal lesson observations are now used more constructively. Social space for students has been increased. Attendance and retention have continued to improve, as have the already high GCE A level pass rates and the progress made by students. The vocational curriculum has been extended appropriately and further vocational courses are planned for next year.

Key strengths

- high retention
- high pass rates in GCE A levels
- good progress made by students taking GCE A level subjects
- good teaching and learning
- wide variety of well-supported enrichment activities
- very inclusive by sixth form college standards
- outstanding learning support
- exceptional student tracking systems
- outstanding leadership and management.

Areas for improvement

The college should address:

- students' progress in a minority of subjects
- embedding of some good practices in teaching and learning
- inconsistency in the quality of tutorial provision
- aspects of self-assessment at college and departmental levels.

Main findings

Achievements and standards

Good: grade 2

5. Achievement and standards are good. Retention has been improving year-on-year and currently stands at 93%, which is above the average for sixth form colleges. Overall success rates are just below the national average for sixth form colleges. The college is more inclusive than many of these colleges. The pass rate at GCE A level, with enrichment courses excluded, is 97% compared to the 95% average for similar colleges. The pass rate at GCE AS level is 85% compared to 83% nationally. Value added performance is improving: at GCE A level, many students achieve better than expected from their GCSE results and AS level students generally achieve in line with expectations. In a small number of subjects students make less than satisfactory progress. Attendance is good: the average attendance rate is 90%. In 2005/06 there were significant improvements in success rates for key skills and for GCSEs, both of which are now well above sixth form college averages. Success rates on part-time courses for adult students have declined and are well below average. The college recognises that more needs to be done to encourage the relatively small number of adult students to take the final examinations.

Quality of provision

Outstanding: grade 1

6. The quality of teaching and learning is good in the large majority of lessons. Lessons are usually well planned with a good variety of learning activities. Teachers' enthusiasm for, and expertise in, their subjects contributes strongly to students' enjoyment of lessons. Students themselves are strongly motivated to achieve. The college has taken steps in the last year to strengthen the rigour and reliability of its lesson observation process. Inspectors agreed with the college that the current profile, which shows that 80% of lessons are good or better, is slightly overstated. A relatively small proportion of lessons are graded as excellent. Some good practices in teaching and learning, such as the sharing of learning objectives with students and the use of differentiated learning activities to ensure all students are appropriately challenged, are not yet sufficiently embedded. Assessment is thorough; most of the time teachers set high standards in marking work promptly and providing constructive and detailed feedback. However, on occasion students wait too long before having their work returned. The learning resource centre and library located in the centre of the college provide excellent study facilities.

7. The curriculum is diverse by sixth form college standards and supports the college's commitment to inclusion. The provision very effectively meets the

needs and interests of college students. Recruitment in September 2006 was significantly above target. The range of GCE AS and A level subjects is very extensive with over 50 subjects available for full-time students to choose from. The vocational programme at level 3 comprises four applied GCE A levels and five BTEC national courses. The level 2 curriculum includes a range of GCSE subjects and four first diploma courses. The enrichment programme offers a very wide range of options and is popular with students. It includes a good choice of sporting activities, a choice of GCE AS subjects such as critical thinking and citizenship, a financial studies course and many other options including language courses, charity work, citizenship day, and Young Enterprise. The relatively small part-time adult programme includes languages, ICT, and a range of short summer courses.

8. Guidance and support for students are outstanding. Initial advice and guidance are very good. The college has close relationships with feeder schools and other colleges. It provides an extensive range of impartial advice and guidance. Support services are very good generally. Learning support is particularly outstanding. Initial assessment is informal and most support needs are identified through self-disclosure and tutor referral. The college devotes considerable resources to learning support, which has a significant impact in helping a significant number of students to achieve well. The voice of learners is well-facilitated, listened to, and influential. Students have good opportunities to express their views and, for example, have influenced the provision of water fountains and the extension to their social area. Pastoral support is good and students value their relationships with personal tutors. Aspects of the tutorial system, for example the quality of group tutorials, are too variable. Individual progress reviews do not always result in measurable action plans designed to help each student improve further. The college has identified these issues in its SAR and changes to the tutorial system are to be implemented in September 2007.

Leadership and management

Outstanding: grade 1

Contributory grades:

Equality of opportunity

Outstanding: grade 1

9. Leadership and management are outstanding. The college has responded well to the areas for development identified at the last inspection by, for example, widening the range of vocational courses at levels 2 and 3 and increasing the ways in which good practice is shared across the college faculties. Students enjoy their time at the college, recognise how well the college is managed and appreciate the accessibility of staff at all levels. Governance is

excellent. Governors are highly committed to the college, monitor college finances, progress and performance closely and contribute appropriately to decisions on the college's strategic direction.

10. Quality assurance systems are clearly defined and understood by staff. Management information is readily accessible, accurate and useful. The judgements in the SAR are based on a detailed analysis of a wide range of performance measures and are largely accurate. Challenging yet realistic targets are set for a wide range of performance measures. Action plans lead to steadily improving performance, for example in the progress made by GCE A level students, or to the maintenance of high standards. There is some variability in the rigour with which departments evaluate their provision, for example in the use they make of their targets to determine their effectiveness, and some sections of the SAR are overly descriptive.

11. Resources for learning are good. Teachers are well qualified, their performance is carefully appraised and they benefit from a wide range of professional development opportunities, which have an appropriate emphasis on teaching and learning. The campus and buildings provide a pleasant learning environment. The college is financially strong, average class sizes are high and it provides good value for money.

12. Equality of opportunity is outstanding. The college monitors equality of opportunity closely and promotes it well. Differences are celebrated and equality of opportunity promoted, for example, through the college's citizenship day and during tutorials. The college's response to recent legislation, including equality relating to race and disability, and to child protection has been good. It takes a firm stance on harassment and bullying. Communications within the college are good and staff feel well supported. The five themes of "Every Child Matters" are integrated well into college life

Learner's achievements

Table 1

Success rates on mainstream level 1 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2004 to 2006, compared to the national rates for colleges of a similar type.

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16-18				19+			
		Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
1 Long	03/04	4	0	66	-66	111	40.5	57	-16.5
	04/05	15	40	64	-24	197	51	56	-5
	05/06	27	33			118	42		
Other	03/04	4	0	66	-66	111	40.5	58	-17.5
	04/05	15	40	63	-23	197	51	56	-5
	05/06	27	33			118	42		

Table 2

Success rates on mainstream level 2 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2003 to 2005, compared to the national rates for colleges of a similar type.

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16-18				19+			
		Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
2 Long	03/04	352	62	74	-12	201	60	55	5
	04/05	311	69	73	-4	137	45	55	-10
	05/06	331	78			67	37		
GCSEs	03/04	275	70	77	-7				
	04/05	265	72	78	-6	26	65	65	0
	05/06	320	80						
Other	03/04	77	34	68	-34	201	60	52	8
	04/05	46	54	62	-8	111	40.5	51	-10.5
	05/06	11	27			64	39		

Table 3

Success rates on mainstream level 3 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2003 to 2005, compared to the national rates for colleges of a similar type.

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16-18				19+			
		Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
3 Long	03/04	5,151	71	80	-9	34	50	57	-7
	04/05	5,258	79.5	82	-2.5	35	51	59	-8
	05/06	5,366	80			30	30		
A levels	03/04	1,923	89	91	-2	11	73	75	-2
	04/05	1,464	90	92	-2	26	46	76	-30
	05/06	1,993	88			23	35		
AS levels	03/04	3,008	63.5	76	-12.5	18	33	52	-19
	04/05	3,670	77	78	-1	9	67	54	13
	05/06	3,065	74			7	14		
GNVQs and precursors	03/04	81	46	68	-22				
	04/05	99	44	74.5	-30.5				
	05/06	96	84						
Key skills	03/04	1,178	23	20	3				
	04/05	610	30.5	23	7.5				
	05/06	647	50						
Other	03/04	139	6.5	64	-57.5	15	53	53.5	-0.5
	04/05	25	40	72	-32	4	50	52	-2
	05/06	171	74			26	58		

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