

## MONITORING VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Name of college: Queen Mary's College, Basingstoke

Date of visit: 12 May 2008

### Context

Queen Mary's college is a sixth form college located in Basingstoke. There are 2200 full-time 16 to 18 year old students and 1500 adult learners mainly on part-time courses. The proportion of students with black and minority ethnic heritage is 5.5% which is higher than the proportion in the local population. The college offers programmes in general education and training from pre-entry level to level 3. Part-time provision is available for 14 to 16 year olds from local secondary schools. The college is a lead partner in Action for Inclusion and Aim Higher. A small and recently re-organised adult and community education provision also exists. GCSE attainment in local secondary schools is at national average and post-16 participation rates in further education and training are good.

### Achievement and standards

What progress has been made in improving success, retention and achievement rates across the college? What progress has been made in improving punctuality?	Reasonable progress
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Overall success rates on long courses have improved over three years. Following changes to franchising arrangements, level 1 long courses have been amended and are taking longer to improve than other levels. At level 2, especially GCSE and General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) courses for 16 -18 yr olds, success rates improved in 2006/07. In addition, the provision of NCFE courses of around 24 weeks has also improved both overall success rates and student choice of additional qualifications. At level 3, success rates for A-level and BTEC courses were above national average in 2006/07. AS-level success rates have improved but remained below the national average.

Retention improved at level 1 and 2 for all age groups and was at or above national averages in 2006/07. Retention at level 3, however, was 4% below national average. The current in-year retention is good.

Pass rates have been at or above national average at all levels for 16-18 year olds for the past 3 years. For adult learners at levels 2 and 3, achievements have been at

or above national average for the past 3 years. At level 1, achievements have remained below the national average.

Value added scores show that A-level and Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) students make good progress with their studies. Attendance and punctuality are efficiently recorded and in year improvements are noted.

### Quality of provision

What progress has been made improving information learning technologies (ILT), the pace of learning and challenge to learners in those lessons identified as least effective?	Reasonable progress
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Considerable investment in information, communication and technology (ICT) has taken place and data projectors are present in all classrooms, studios and laboratories. Teachers are now more confident to use ILT in lessons. Helpful individual training in ILT has been provided by IT staff to encourage and develop teachers' skills. For example, the mathematics and visual arts teams have developed useful and attractive study materials on the college intranet.

Have improvements to group tutorials been sustained? Has target setting and the recording of support and progress been improved?	Reasonable progress
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The tutorial system for full-time students has been reviewed and changed to make better use of both tutor and student time. Formal tutorial class contact has been reduced and one to one sessions have largely replaced whole group tutorials. These sessions are regarded positively by students who commented on the good support they receive from their tutors. In addition, improved electronic recording of outcomes from these meetings, together with improved access to students' data by all relevant staff, allows more timely intervention if appropriate.

### Leadership and management

What developments have taken place in the 14-19 partnership?	Significant progress
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Partnership working is well developed and the college takes a lead role in the local 14-19 partnership. Progress in developing collaborative working for the new diplomas is good. Considerable thought and effort has gone into developing the society, health and development diploma which will be taught in two colleges and four schools. Much work has gone into planning the development of skills laboratories in participating schools, joint timetabling and transport. In addition the local health service and other partners have been involved and are enthusiastic about the

potential outcomes from the diploma. Good progress has also been made in developing the IT and hair and beauty diplomas for 2009.

The college continues to work with local schools in a variety of ways. For example primary school pupils regularly use an adapted laboratory for science activities. The college science facilities are used as a sub-regional centre of the national network of science learning centres. In addition the college leads on the Hampshire Aim Higher project.

What strategies have managers used to improve success and achievement rates? How are these strategies being monitored?	Reasonable progress
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A number of subject learning coaches have been appointed and trained in order to improve teaching and learning. Alternative courses have been added to the curriculum in order to widen student choice at level 3. For example, a vocational science course and a free standing mathematics qualification have been developed as alternatives to A-levels. Additional qualifications, usually directly relevant to specific A-level courses, have also been added to the curriculum. The teaching accommodation and specialist resources have improved. Greater access to ICT for both staff and students has meant that internal communications and study space for students have improved. Curriculum teams have focused on differentiation and on meeting the needs of all learners in lesson planning.

Where weaknesses have been identified, how have managers improved the quality of teaching and learning?	Reasonable progress
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Middle and senior managers have completed management training in order to bring about improvements. Curriculum teams have focused on practical ways in which to improve teaching and learning and to raise attainment. For example, in modern foreign languages, the curriculum team consulted the students and identified that speaking and listening skills were an area of concern. New arrangements were put in place which the students found more supportive. In mathematics an alternative level 3 pathway was identified and developed. In business studies changes to the sequence of syllabus topics and a policy of rapid intervention to address concerns have brought about significant improvements.