

## MONITORING VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Name of college: Cheadle and Marple College

Date of visit: 20 May 2008

### Context

Cheadle and Marple Sixth Form College is located in the metropolitan borough of Stockport. The college operates on two main campuses, one in Cheadle and the other in Marple. The college was established in 1995 following a merger of two sixth form colleges and was known as Ridge Danyers College until 2004.

The college offers a broad range of courses in 14 of the 15 sector subject areas. Approximately 85% of the provision is at level 3. In 2006/07, the college had over 3,000 learners; most of whom were 16-18 years old. Around 86% of 16-18 year olds and 93% of adult learners are white. The college offers vocational provision for 14-16 year olds, work-based learning, Train to Gain contracts and is the lead partner in a Centre of Vocational Excellence specialising in care of the elderly.

Less than 5% of the population are from minority ethnic backgrounds. Although the borough is relatively prosperous, pockets of social and economic disadvantage exist. The proportion of pupils achieving five or more GCSEs at grades A\*-C is slightly below the national average.

The college experienced significant changes in staffing structures in 2006/07, especially at senior and middle management level. The current senior management team is smaller than it was at the previous inspection, and many senior post holders are new to the college. Support staffing has also been significantly restructured.

Cheadle and Marple college was last inspected in January 2007. At that inspection all aspects were satisfactory. Of the six curriculum areas inspected, three were good and three satisfactory.

### Achievement and standards

To what extent has the college brought about improvements in retention of learners aged 16-18?	Reasonable progress
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Since the previous inspection, retention has improved at all levels for all learners. At level 1, retention has improved dramatically, from 75% in 2005/06 to 85% in 2006/07 for learners aged 16-18. Retention rates for all learners, at all levels, are around the previous year's average for similar colleges.

Has learners' progress relative to their prior attainment improved overall, especially in GCE A level mathematics, biology and chemistry?	Insufficient progress
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The value added system indicates that students are beginning to make better progress at AS level. However at A Level, most students make satisfactory progress, as they did in the previous inspection. Students' progress in A level biology, chemistry and mathematics has improved and is now satisfactory. In A level English language and in English language and literature students perform consistently better than predicted. Although in other subjects including A level art and design, in media and in Spanish, students underperform and have done so since the previous inspection.

#### Quality of provision

What progress has been made to improve the quality of teaching and learning?	Reasonable progress
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Strategies for improving teaching and learning take priority in the college. Systems for the observation of teaching and learning have been strengthened and are well understood. Sharing of best practice is widespread. The amount of good and better teaching has increased from 58% in 2005/06, to 69% in 2006/07.

Documentation for the quality assurance of lessons is comprehensive and detailed. Outcomes of teaching and learning observations are analysed at sector subject area level and used in departmental action planning. At an individual level, the outcome of the lesson observation is now linked clearly with performance review. Teachers who receive a grade 3 in their observation are offered considerable support, including extensive professional development and the opportunity to observe best practice both at the college and elsewhere.

In many instances, the quality of the observer's written feedback for lesson observations is detailed and of good quality. However, inconsistency of practice exists and sometimes written feedback does not justify the grade being awarded. In a few reports, the observer makes insufficient reference to the learning outcomes and little mention is made of the standard of work and students' progress.

The college has developed effective partnerships with other colleges to share best practice and resolve areas for improvement in teaching and learning.

The self-assessment report identifies that systems to monitor the quality of tutorials are not yet fully embedded. Has the college made progress in this area and does it have a view on the current quality of tutorials?	Significant progress
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Processes for monitoring the quality of tutorials are now fully embedded. All tutorial sessions are observed as part of the college quality assurance system. Analysis of the observations is carried out and strengths and areas for improvement identified. Actions for improvement are already in place. Training for all tutors will take place in the summer term. Students comment favourably on the quality of group tutorials and on the individual support given by their tutors.

#### Leadership and management

What progress has the college made to the way that key issues are resolved?	Reasonable progress
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Overall improvements have been made in the way key issues are resolved. Data is used more routinely at all levels to monitor and evaluate performance. Targets are more challenging and actions are specific and time related. Subjects in 'special measures' are monitored thoroughly. Actions to resolve underperformance are effective.

The college has undergone significant staffing changes in 2006/07. Changes have been managed well and communication during the restructure was good. The college acknowledges that the recent restructure may have led to slower progress. It is too early to assess the full affect of the staffing changes. However, results from the most recent examinations, taken in January 2008, indicate an overall improvement in pass rates of 1% and in the proportion of high grades which has increased by 3%. Retention has continued to improve by a further 1% from 2006/07.

Has the financial stability of the college improved?	Reasonable progress
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All financial targets have been met or exceeded. The college is confident that it will move up from Category C before the next academic year.