

# Bilborough Sixth Form College

Inspection report

---

Provider reference 130787

Published date May 2009

---

Audience	Post-sixteen
Published date	May 2009
Provider reference	130787

## Contents

---

Background information.....	3
Summary of grades awarded .....	5
Overall judgement.....	6
Key strengths and areas for improvement.....	7
Main findings .....	8

## 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](http://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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)); reports from the inspectorate annual assessment visits or quality monitoring inspection; and data on learners and their achievement 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
- achievement and standards
- quality of provision
- leadership and management.

### Description of the provider

1. Bilborough Sixth Form College (SFC) is on the western edge of Nottingham bordering South East Derbyshire. The college is situated on the edge of the Bilborough estate which contains areas of educational and social deprivation and has a very low level of participation in higher education. The college is the only SFC in the area and its focus is on providing General Certificate of Education (GCE) A level and AS levels for students aged 16 to 18 studying full-time. It also provides some GCSE programmes, including mathematics and English. The college is introducing the International Baccalaureate and the level 3 diploma in business, finance and accounts in September 2009.

2. Most students are from Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire. The proportion of young people in Nottingham City achieving five high grade passes at GCSE, including mathematics and English, is well below average at 35%. Increasing numbers of students are from a minority ethnic heritage. In 2008/09, 77% of students identified themselves as White British. The largest minority ethnic group is of Indian heritage at approximately 5%. In 2007/08, the college recruited 1,731 full-time students with a higher proportion of female than male students. Courses are provided in 10 of the sector subject areas with the most popular area being science and mathematics. The college's mission is 'to offer academic excellence and to nurture personal development in a supportive environment for serious and committed students'.

## Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision	Good: Grade 2
Capacity to improve	Good: Grade 2
Achievement and standards	Good: Grade 2
Quality of provision	Good: Grade 2
Leadership and management	Good: Grade 2
<i>Equality of opportunity</i>	<i>Good: contributory grade 2</i>

## Overall judgement

### Effectiveness of provision

Good: Grade 2

3. The effectiveness of provision is good and some aspects are outstanding. Achievement and standards are good with high success rates for advanced level courses, level 3 key skills and high grade passes at GCSE. In 2007/08, a small minority of subjects achieved below average success rates and overall value-added outcomes declined.
4. Teaching and learning are good with thorough planning, interesting lessons and particularly good use of ILT. In a small minority of lessons, teaching does not address the full range of students' individual needs.
5. The college's response to meeting the needs and interests of students and employers is outstanding. Students benefit from a wide range of subject choices. The enrichment programme is exceptionally good with very high participation rates. Educational and social inclusion are outstanding. The college has widened participation successfully and is excellent at raising students' aspirations and broadening horizons.
6. Guidance and support are outstanding with particularly effective academic and personal support encouraging students successfully to improve their achievement.
7. Leadership and management are good with effective quality assurance securing improvements to provision and students' outcomes. Most curriculum areas are well managed. The promotion of equality of opportunity is good but the monitoring of the performance of different groups of students requires further development.

### Capacity to improve

Good: Grade 2

8. The college's capacity to improve is good. The self-assessment report is detailed and areas of lower performance are acknowledged frankly and graded accordingly. Action plans arising from self-assessment provide a clear agenda for improvement. Although inspectors graded the overall quality of provision lower than the college, they agreed with the grades within this area for teaching and learning, response to students' needs, and guidance and support. Quality assurance procedures are applied consistently across the college. They have been successful in securing improvements to areas such as teaching and learning and self-assessment. Most curriculum areas are well managed with managers clearly accountable for outcomes. College resources are targeted on improvements and financial management is good.

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

9. The college has made good progress in rectifying the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. Retention rates, previously an area for improvement on AS level courses, are now consistently high in both GCE A and AS levels. The sharing of best practice between subject areas is now a strength of teaching and learning as is the use of information learning technology (ILT). Level 3 key skills success rates have improved significantly and are now well above average. Strengths identified at the last inspection have been maintained with the exception of the decline in value-added outcomes in 2007/08.

### Key strengths

- high success rates for most advanced level courses
- a significant proportion of high grades at GCE A level
- very good progression to higher education and employment
- good teaching and learning with particularly good use of ILT
- exceptional enrichment programme with very high participation
- particularly effective academic and personal support
- outstanding educational and social inclusion.

### Areas for improvement

*The college should address:*

- students' progress compared to their prior attainment at GCSE
- a minority of underperforming courses
- the strategic monitoring of equal opportunities data on the performance of different groups
- a minority of teaching where students are insufficiently stretched and challenged.

## Main findings

### Achievement and standards

Good: Grade 2

10. Achievement and standards are good, which concurs with the college's self-assessment. Students have achieved consistently high success rates with a substantial proportion of high grades for several years. Retention is particularly good and improving. In 2007/08, retention for GCE A and AS levels was 98% and 94% respectively. Pass rates are at the high national average for sixth form colleges. Within this, a small minority of subjects including information and communication technology (ICT), psychology and law achieved below average success rates in 2007/08. Attendance is good and monitored closely.
11. Substantial increases have been secured to success rates in key skills at level 3 and in 2007/08 success rates were well above average. Value-added measures show that in 2005/06 and 2006/07, most students made good progress compared to their prior attainment at GCSE. In 2007/08, this measure declined with some wide variations between subjects. Male and female students achieve broadly similar success rates but female students achieve a larger proportion of high grade passes. The largest groups of students from minority ethnic heritages achieve similar or higher success rates than the college average. However, in 2007/08, the smaller group of students from a Pakistani heritage and those from a Black Caribbean heritage achieved lower than average success rates. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve success rates similar to the college average. High grade passes at GCSE in English and mathematics in 2007/08 were above average.

### Quality of provision

Good: Grade 2

12. The quality of provision is good and some aspects are outstanding. The college self-assessed quality of provision as outstanding. Teaching and learning are good which concurs with the college's self-assessment. Arrangements for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning are comprehensive. The lesson observation process provides a thorough assessment of the strengths and areas for improvement in individual lessons. Information collected during observation is used well to identify training needs and to share best practice. The college has an appropriately strong focus on further improving the quality of teaching and learning and invests considerable resources in staff training.
13. Teachers are well qualified and experienced. Teachers motivate and engage students by using a broad range of teaching methods. ILT is used well in lessons to make learning interesting and interactive. The virtual learning environment (VLE) is used increasingly to promote and develop students' independent learning skills. The best lessons are characterised by thorough planning, high expectations and by the use of challenging activities that involve students in debate and discussion. In a small minority of less successful lessons, teaching does not address the full range of students' individual needs and some students are not sufficiently stretched or challenged. In a few



subjects students do not make the progress expected based on their starting points. Assessment is frequent, accurate and fair. Work is marked promptly and teachers provide good feedback that guides students on what they need to do to improve.

14. The college is outstanding at identifying and meeting the needs and interests of students. This agrees with the self-assessed grade. The curriculum provides students with a wide choice of advanced level subjects. Key skill courses enable students to develop excellent communication and computing skills that make a sound contribution to their future economic well-being. Progression rates between courses at different levels are very high. Most students progress to higher education and others to employment and training. Students benefit from an exceptional enrichment programme and participation rates are extremely high. These activities contribute significantly to students' enjoyment of college life.
15. Educational and social inclusion are outstanding. The college has widened participation successfully and is excellent at raising students' aspirations and broadening horizons. It is a safe, happy and harmonious environment where students from different cultures, faiths and socio-economic backgrounds promote community cohesion well. Students respect one another and together make a significant contribution to the college community. The student executive plays an active role and ensures students' views are taken seriously. Partnerships with local schools are strong and the college is a key stakeholder in developing the 14-19 curriculum within both Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire local authority areas.
16. Guidance and support are outstanding. This agrees with the college's self-assessment. Academic and personal support arrangements are particularly effective and encourage students to improve their achievements. Students benefit from highly effective initial advice and guidance that ensures they enrol on the correct course. Initial assessment identifies students' additional learning needs accurately and promptly. The provision of additional learning support is outstanding and is highly valued by students. The college's student services' 'One Stop Shop' provides exceptional guidance and support in relation to students' personal and welfare needs. Themed diversity and health weeks support students' understanding well about their rights and responsibilities and the need to lead a healthy lifestyle.
17. Personal tutors provide excellent support for students. Tutors are highly skilled and effective at using targets and action plans to help improve student achievement. Frequent individual tutorials enable students to discuss their progress and are extremely effective in monitoring and improving performance. Students value the excellent academic guidance and support provided by their subject tutors. Subject support is available to students outside timetabled lessons and provides effective additional help. Subject tutors frequently and willingly provide extra support and guidance. Careers advice and guidance are outstanding. Guidance and support arrangements for students wanting to progress to higher education courses are particularly effective. Attendance

monitoring arrangements and communications with parents, carers and guardians are very good.

Leadership and management

Good: Grade 2

*Equality of opportunity*

*Good: grade 2*

18. Leadership and management are good, which concurs with the college's self-assessment (SAR). The principal and deputy principal provide clear and consultative leadership. The college's well supported and understood strategic mission to provide advanced level courses and foster academic excellence is the subject of regular review to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of the local community and respond to national and local priorities.
19. Quality assurance procedures are applied consistently and have led to improvements in areas such as the observation of teaching and learning and the accuracy of self-assessment. Overall, the college SAR presents a frank account of strengths and areas for improvement. The small minority of subjects with below average outcomes are recognised and awarded grades reflecting the need for improvement. The SAR includes a full response to students' views and feedback on the quality of provision and the support they receive. The decline in value-added outcomes in 2007/08 is acknowledged fully with appropriate action plans and targets.
20. Most curriculum management is good, although some variations persist and are reflected in poorer success rates. The college is currently undertaking a review of its structure to judge its appropriateness and institute any necessary changes. Data are timely and accurate and the comprehensive observation of teaching and learning has contributed to an increased and high proportion of good or better teaching.
21. Governance is good. Governors use their broad range of skills well to support and challenge managers. Their curriculum links are well developed and useful. They have been successful in diversifying their membership to better reflect the college community. Financial management and value for money are good.
22. The promotion of equality of opportunity is good. Equality and diversity have a high profile within the college which provides an inclusive and safe environment for students from a wide range of backgrounds. However, the below average outcomes for a small number of students of minority ethnic heritage in 2007/08 was not recognised or included in the SAR and inspectors judged that the college awarded an over-generous grade to equality of opportunity. The college complies with the requirements of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and the Disability Discrimination Act 2005. It meets the current government requirements under the Child Protection Act.

## Learners' achievement

Table 1

Success rates on mainstream level 1 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2006 to 2008, compared with the national rates for colleges of a similar type.

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16-18				19+			
		Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	<i>Diff</i>	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	<i>Diff</i>
1 Long	05/06	34	100	71	29	**	**	**	**
	06/07	32	100	73	27	**	**	**	**
	07/08*	**	**	N/A		**	**	N/A	
GNVQs and precursors	05/06	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**
	06/07	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**
	07/08*	**	**	N/A	**	**	**	N/A	
NVQs	05/06	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**
	06/07	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**
	07/08*	**	**	N/A		**	**	N/A	
Other	05/06	34	100	71	29	**	**	**	**
	06/07	32	100	72	28	**	**	**	**
	07/08*			N/A		**	**	N/A	

\* College data

\*\* Low numbers

Table 2

Success rates on mainstream level 2 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2006 to 2008, compared with the national rates for colleges of a similar type.

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16-18				19+			
		Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	<i>Diff</i>	Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	<i>Diff</i>
2 Long	05/06	180	94	78	16	**	**	**	**
	06/07	198	89	82	7	**	**	**	**
	07/08*	251	76	N/A		**	**	N/A	
GCSEs	05/06	113	90	82	8	**	**	**	**
	06/07	131	84	83	1	**	**		**
	07/08*	146	90	N/A		**	**	N/A	
GNVQs and precursors	05/06	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**
	06/07	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**
	07/08*	**	**	N/A		**	**	N/A	
NVQs	05/06	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**
	06/07	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**
	07/08*	**	**	N/A		**	**	N/A	
Other	05/06	67	100	70	30	**	**	**	**
	06/07	67	99	79	20	**	**	**	**
	07/08*	105	58	N/A		**	**	N/A	

\* College data

\*\* Low numbers

Table 3

Success rates on mainstream level 3 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2006 to 2008, compared with 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	05/06	5939	86	84	2	**	**	**	**
	06/07	6448	87	85	2	**	**	**	**
	07/08*	7470	87	N/A		**	**	N/A	
A/A2 levels	05/06	2390	92	93	-1	**	**	**	**
	06/07	2422	94	93	1	**	**	**	**
	07/08*	2785	94	N/A		**	**	N/A	
AS levels	05/06	3531	82	79	3	**	**	**	**
	06/07	4021	84	81	3	**	**	**	**
	07/08*	4664	83	N/A		**	**	N/A	
GNVQs and precursors	05/06	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**
	06/07	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**
	07/08*	**	**	N/A		**	**	N/A	
NVQs	05/06	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**
	06/07	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**
	07/08*	**	**	N/A		**	**	N/A	
Other	05/06	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**
	06/07	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**
	07/08*	**	**	N/A		**	**	N/A	

\* College data

\*\* Low numbers