



Coulsdon College

Reinspection monitoring visit report

Unique reference number: 130433

Name of lead inspector: Richard Beaumont HMI

Last day of inspection: 7 October 2009

Type of provider: Sixth form college

Address: Placehouse Lane
Old Coulsdon
Surrey
CR5 1YA

Telephone number: 01737 551176

Published date	9 November 2009
Inspection Number	342726

RE-INSPECTION MONITORING VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Context and focus of visit

Coulsdon College is a sixth form college in South Croydon. Approximately 75% of its students come from the borough and the remainder from neighbouring parts of South London. In 2008/09, 63% of the students attending the college were from black and minority ethnic groups. This is significantly higher than the local population. In 2008/09, 1,227 students were enrolled onto programmes at levels 1 to 3 in 10 of the 15 sector subject areas. Of these, 13% of students received additional learning support.

At the previous inspection in November 2008, the overall effectiveness of Coulsdon College was judged to be satisfactory. Equality of opportunity was judged to be good. Capacity to improve, achievement and standards, quality of provision and leadership and management were judged to be satisfactory. Of the four subject areas inspected, one was judged to be good and two satisfactory, but the area of science and mathematics was judged inadequate. This report focuses on the themes explored during the visit, which include the two mandatory themes of outcomes for learners and self-assessment and improvement planning.

Themes

Self-assessment and improvement planning

Since the previous inspection, has the college made improvements to the self-assessment process?	Reasonable progress
--	---------------------

Following the previous inspection there have been positive changes made to the college quality cycle, including improved rigour in the monitoring of individual subject self-assessment reports. These are now clear, open and sufficiently judgmental, although some reports identified strengths that are no more than normal practice. The Director of Quality Improvement closely monitors subject self-assessment reports and provides clear feedback on ways to improve. More thorough and regular monitoring of quality improvement plans has been introduced. Since the previous inspection, the college provides better access to information for teachers responsible for monitoring and managing course performance. The college has also refined the process of course quality reviews. In a few cases the college was comparing success rates with incorrect national averages.

Outcomes for learners

What improvements have been made to AS-level success rates since the previous inspection?	Insufficient progress
---	-----------------------

At the previous inspection, 2007/08 AS-level success rates were 69%. In 2008/09, success rates have remained at this level. AS-level success rates are 12 percentage points below the 2007/08 national average for sixth form colleges. Retention rates improved in 2008/09, although achievement rates fell.

A weakness identified at inspection was that pre-course guidance did not sufficiently match students to AS-level programmes. Following inspection, the college developed a range of initiatives to improve AS-level success rates. Particular emphasis has been placed on the recruitment process, initial assessment and the monitoring of students' progress in the early stage of the programme. The full impact of these initiatives will not be fully realised until September 2010.

What improvements have been made to students' attendance and punctuality?

Insufficient progress

At the previous inspection attendance and punctuality were highlighted as key areas for improvement. Since then, the college has revised the attendance policy. However, the policy is insufficiently defined in some key aspects. Implementation of attendance and punctuality procedures is not systematically applied by all teaching staff. A college-wide attendance 'intervention' procedure was introduced just before the previous inspection. However, based on college data for 2008/09, the intervention procedure is insufficiently utilised. Records of interventions are not systematically maintained, nor the impact of interventions analysed. Observations of teaching and learning highlight poor attendance and punctuality as a recurring theme.

In 2008/09, attendance rates improved by 4 percentage points to 83% and tutorial attendance improved by 5 percentage points to 79%. However, these rates are generally in line with those of 2006/07. The college recognises that attendance and punctuality continue to be a key area for further development.

Quality of provision

What improvements have been made since the previous inspection to the quality of teaching and learning?

Reasonable progress

Since the previous inspection, the college has updated and improved the process for the observation of teaching and learning. More staff have been trained to observe, and the criteria for observing teaching and learning have been revised. As a consequence, there has been a reduction in the number of outstanding grades being awarded to lessons. Actions to support poor teaching and learning are now prompt and the proportion of unsatisfactory teaching has been reduced.

In most cases, there is clear recording of observations and adequate matching to grades. However, a small proportion of lessons have been over-graded and insufficient account is given to the disruption caused to learning through poor

punctuality. The college recognises that there is too much satisfactory teaching and learning. Recent staff training has included focused sessions for all teachers, for example, on dealing with difficult students and new approaches to planning for individual learning. The college has recently joined an external quality review scheme with similar colleges in the South of England. This involves shared observations of teaching and learning which have already led to some improvements in the teaching of psychology.

Leadership and management

What improvements have been made in terms of reviewing under-performing courses and setting performance targets across curricular areas? Reasonable progress

At the previous inspection, the recently appointed Director of Quality Improvement had introduced the practice of monitoring all courses with subject managers. Following the inspection, the process of monitoring was improved even further. Very poorly performing courses were regularly monitored by the principal and deputy principal and most made improvements. Heads of departments and programme leaders have increased their understanding of course performance.

For the start of 2009/10 the college has introduced a revised process for the setting of performance targets. Results from initial assessment and monitoring of progress over the first few weeks of the course will inform predictions at course level. Senior management recognise that overambitious targets from previous years need to be reviewed in line with students' reports and previous predicted outcomes.

Subject area

How has the college improved the quality of provision in science and mathematics? Reasonable progress

The college has introduced a number of changes to staffing, student recruitment procedures and the monitoring of students' progress. Overall success rates in science and mathematics improved in 2008/09 by 2 percentage points, although this continues to be significantly below the national average. A new head of department and psychology teaching team have recently joined the college. Entry requirements for students have been raised and a range of initial assessments are used to test their abilities. A senior manager has reviewed every application. A probationary period has been introduced to monitor students who have been accepted but do not fully satisfy the entry requirements, such as those with qualifications from abroad. Close monitoring of all students at the start of the year is taking place and reports are about to be produced on each student's potential to succeed. The college has clear procedures to offer alternative provision and additional support.

The experience of students on AS and A2 level programmes varies. The tutorial process does not sufficiently meet the needs of all students. Learning resources on

some courses are not fully developed or readily available. Students experience varied levels of challenge from different teaching staff. The internal teaching and learning profile for 2008/09 is over-generous.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for students of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this report in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 08456 404040, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester, M2 7LA

T: 08456 404040
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk
© Crown copyright 2009