

## MONITORING VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Name of college: Cadbury Sixth Form College

Date of visit: 15 April 2008

### Context

Cadbury Sixth Form College's catchment area includes over 100 feeder schools across the Birmingham conurbation and schools outside this but within a 15 to 20 mile radius of the college. The ethnic diversity of the college's student population broadly mirrors that of Birmingham as a whole. The college recruits more students with relatively low GCSE point scores than is typical for a sixth form college.

Cadbury Sixth Form College was inspected in October 2005. The college's overall effectiveness was judged to be good. All the key cross-college judgements were also judged to be good apart from achievement and standards which were judged to be satisfactory. There are nearly 1400 full-time equivalent students at the college, of which 96% are age 16-18. 55% of students at the college are female. Most of the college's learners are taking level 3 courses, particularly advanced subsidiary levels (AS levels) and general certificate of education advanced levels (A-level).

This feedback contains brief findings from the annual monitoring visit. It focuses on the themes explored during the visit and does not attempt to give a comprehensive overview of the college's performance.

### Achievement and standards

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| What has been the progress in improving learners' outcomes? | Insufficient progress |
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The success rate for 16-18 year old students on AS level courses improved year on year in the three years to 2005/06 but was still 4% below the national rate of 73%. Results for 2006/07 showed no improvement. The success rate for 16-18 year old students on A-level courses in the three years to 2005/06 was close to the national average but also did not improve in 2006/07. In 2006/07 key skills success rates for 16-18 year old students at level 3 declined to the very low level of 9%. GCSE success rates for 16-18 year olds have been inconsistent, but in 2005/06 were just above the national average (85% against 83%), although this was not significant. The college success rate in 2006/07 continued this inconsistent performance and was lower at 80%.

Success rates on 19+ long course level 1 have improved significantly but at 42% in 2006/07, remain low. Retention was also low at 57%. Success rates on 19+ short courses both over 5 weeks and under 5 weeks have shown significant improvements at 64% and 96% respectively.

The college recognises that success rates did not show the improvements expected for the majority of students in 2006/07 and have introduced a number of new strategies in 2007/08. The college has set challenging pass rate targets for 2007/08. In year retention rates have improved across the provision apart from 19+long courses at level 1, which is 58%, 16-18 GCSEs which is 78% and 19+ GCSEs at 42%. Student weekly attendance rates in 2007/08 show a significant improvement.

Other activities including the internal quality review (IQR) process, central return of students' completed work and learning support are having a positive impact but departmental workshops for groups or individual learners who need support with their learning are often ineffective.

### Quality of provision

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| Has the take up, delivery and evaluation of learning support improved? | Significant progress |
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The college has reorganised and relocated student services, which includes the provision of learning support, to a central position in the college. This has improved its accessibility. Early in 2007/08 staff issues have been resolved and learning support is provided by an SEN teacher and four learning mentors. The mentors are newly created posts, first introduced in 2006/07, using gap year graduates who are interested in becoming teachers.

The service has been actively promoted and the numbers of tutor and student self-referrals has increased. In 2006/07, 120 learners received learning support. In 2007/08, this has increased to over 200 students. New procedures are in place to regularly review student progress and the support being given. Arrangements to follow up poor attendance are good. Learning support is appropriately evaluated through the use of student feedback. The college needs to develop still further its analysis of the impact of learning support.

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| What progress has the college made in developing work-related study, preparing students for employment and employer responsiveness? | Reasonable progress |
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The college has developed its tutorial programme to include time for developing employment and enterprise skills. The tutorial programme includes elements which develop students' preparation for employment, including CV writing, interview skills, time management and problem solving. Students also participate in a range of challenging activities which develop their awareness of the world of work. These include students volunteering as counsellors for ChildLine and a student organised learning conference in which student delegates observed lessons to identify effective learning. Students are encouraged to gain work experience whilst at college. The work experience programme has grown significantly since the previous inspection and currently nearly 300 students are benefiting from this activity. Two thirds of

students complete voluntary work experience. Students who chose employment rather than university are appropriately referred to Connexions. The college holds a number of careers days, including accountancy, ICT and medicine. The student bulletin is effectively used to promote career and employment options.

The college has effectively engaged with employers to support the work experience programme and is well supported by the Centre for Business Excellence in Birmingham. The college also plans to start a commercial /industrial mentor programme in September 2008 similar to the graduate mentor scheme already in operation.

### Leadership and management

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| What is the impact of the internal quality review (IQR) on quality improvements? | Reasonable progress |
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The first three IQRs took place in 2006/07 and were targeted at three low performing subjects. In government and politics and fine art, success rates improved considerably. Some improvements were also noted in physical education. In 2007/08 the IQR focus is on departmental performance, providing support to understand underperformance, support departmental leadership and identify good practice. The IQR team consists of three or four senior managers, including the head of department being reviewed. The IQRs are well planned. IQR findings are clear and identify key actions which are agreed with the department. These actions are added to the department's annual improvement plan. Senior managers regularly and effectively monitored annual improvement plans. Appropriate arrangements are in place to share identified good practice.