

MONITORING VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Name of college: Sir George Monoux Sixth Form College

Date of visit: 19 May 2008

Context

Sir George Monoux Sixth Form College is situated on a single site in the London Borough of Waltham Forest. Almost all the current 1918 students attending the college are aged 16-18. Students at Sir George Monoux are culturally diverse, most live locally or come from neighbouring boroughs, with some or much identified deprivation. The college offers vocational programmes at levels 1, 2 and 3, GCSE and GCE A and AS level provision. Approximately half of the current students study GCE A and AS courses. At the previous inspection in 2005 the college was judged to be satisfactory for overall effectiveness, capacity to improve, leadership and management, achievement and standards and quality of provision.

Achievement and standards

What action has been taken to reverse the decline in overall success rates?	Reasonable progress
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Success rates at level 2 and level 3 improved markedly in 2006/07. Level 2 rates improved by 15% to 84% and level 3 increased by 9% to 79%. However, success rates at level 1 declined. In curriculum areas such as health and social care, history, modern foreign languages and hospitality success rates are significantly improved. AS level in arts media and publishing and information communication technology rates however remain too low despite improvement. Key skills achievements have improved. Vocational students make good progress. Progress for GCE A and AS level students against that predicted from their prior attainment is satisfactory. Success rates for students from cultural groups such as Bangladeshi and Pakistani boys in 2006/07 are improved.

Quality of provision

What strategies are in place to improve the planning of individual learning?	Reasonable progress
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The previous annual assessment visit noted that a small scale pilot for the assessment of new students introduced in 2006/07 did not adequately meet their individual needs. All students' literacy, numeracy and learning styles are now assessed. Learning support assistants are quickly assigned to those who require

additional learning support. Study skills support is also available. The college has a team with specific responsibility for developing skills for life. The team has made a useful evaluation of the literacy and numeracy levels of new students this year. It revealed many students had literacy skills two levels below their main programme of study. The college is addressing this deficit by in-service training to help teachers to plan and meet these needs in the classroom. In addition the college intends to change the length of induction from one to four weeks next year to improve effectiveness and make better use of initial assessment to plan learning. It is too early to judge the impact these strategies will have.

What progress has been made in the implementation of a tutorial system?	Significant progress
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College managers have implemented a new tutorial system which gives teachers specific responsibility for, and the time to concentrate on, tutorial work with their students. Teachers are committed to the new arrangements and the differences between group and one to one tutorials are well understood. These tutorials now emphasise the importance of promoting learning and enrichment. Group tutorials promote learners social and personal development well and one to one tutorials focus more on monitoring students' individual progress. The tutorial handbook provides useful information for teachers. The pastoral team evaluates the quality of tutorials carefully and has a good understanding of their impact.

Leadership and management

What progress is made on integrating the management information system?	Reasonable progress
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College data is now used more effectively to plan improvements in quality. Data is well used and understood at senior management level. The use of information across the college however is under-developed. The management information system does not currently meet the needs of staff at middle and curriculum management level. The college is now consulting on a management information system that will meet current and future needs and has set clear targets for the system's implementation.

How is the college continuing to develop the teaching observation scheme?	Reasonable progress
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The teaching and learning observation scheme is well established. Both subject specialist and non specialist observers carry out extensive observations annually. Advanced practitioners work with all teachers to support them and to share good practice. Analysis of observation data has identified improvements in meeting learners' needs and improved use of information learning technology in lessons.

Has the quality of self-assessment and quality improvement planning continued to improve?	Reasonable progress
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The annual system of review and self-assessment now puts more emphasis on wider consultation. The contribution of individual teachers, teaching teams and students to annual reviews has increased. The college self-assessment report is evaluative and effectively identifies strengths and areas for improvement. For example, the report identifies the need to improve students' progress against their prior attainment. The quality improvement plan links well to the self-assessment report. The quality improvement plan sets actions to improve AS and level 1 success rates. It focuses well on strategies to identify the needs of students as they start their courses. It also sets targets for implementing the new management information system and for making better use of information technology in the classroom.

Staff are committed to quality improvement, but are insufficiently aware of the key strengths and areas for improvement in the college self-assessment report. They are insufficiently aware of the full range of data to demonstrate how well their courses are performing.