

Provider Type

Sixth form college

Summary of how the case study can be used

This case study demonstrates a sixth form college provider who has continued to achieve Grade 1 Capacity to Improve since their 05/06 inspection.

Background and context

Date of Last Inspection March 2007

Summary of grades awarded at the Inspection

- Effectiveness of provision – Outstanding: Grade 1
- Capacity to improve – Outstanding: Grade 1
- Achievements and standards – Outstanding: Grade 1
- Quality of provision – Outstanding: Grade 1
- Leadership and management – Outstanding: Grade 1

Context of the College

The number of learners in 2004/5 was 2,588. Of these, 1,273 were aged 16-18, almost all full-time. The majority of learners aged 16-18 study level 3 courses, with a small proportion studying at level 2, and a few at level 1. Of the 1,315 adult learners in 2004/05, most were part-time.

The provider's approach to quality improvement

The voice of the learner plays a key role in all aspects of institutional monitoring and development. Quality improvements within the college invariably are based upon meeting the needs of each student. The following quote from the college's 2007 Ofsted inspection report captures this,

The college is an outstanding college where every learner does matter. It does everything in its power to maximise the life chances of its learners in a friendly, caring learning environment that encourages and enables them to do their best and achieve their potential – Ofsted 2007

- As well as formal academic qualifications, learners achieve extremely well in other ways. There are many examples of learners excelling in a whole range of extra curricular activities such as sporting and drama activities. Despite the national decline in the numbers of students undertaking residentials, particularly overseas residentials, the college actively promotes international residentials – these are seen as a major 'learning activity' for many students. Typical overseas locations include: Kenya, New York, Poland and Lanzarote including checking on their EMA payments
- a member of staff on the aspiring leader programme chose to investigate 'language development' within the college. From the analysis a new language suite was proposed, developed and successfully introduced
- the outcomes of teaching and learning observations are used to identify whole college issues and prioritise developments. These feed through into the professional development programme and the support made available by learning champions. Recent improvements have been made in the dissemination of information on the qualities of teaching in individual curriculum areas. This has helped to identify and share good practice.

Processes used to enhance quality

- The learner experience and responses are constantly reviewed and acted upon
- the student council is a college-wide elected body, which focuses on issues related to students. Its main role is to enhance the quality of college life from a student perspective
- the Student Council has an input into key areas of college life through its representation onto working groups and forums e.g. The Governing Body, Health and Safety and the LRC forum
- the college constantly reviews its curriculum provision

Each student is able to develop a curriculum and associated 'enrichment' programme unique to their personal needs and interests.

Resources/information and tools used

- In January 2008 the college opened a new student services facility which supports student educational needs. The new facility allows students to complete a range of tasks within modern surroundings all within one location
- demanding targets for further improvement in attendance are constantly identified and met. The college makes a timely response to student absences using information provided through the electronic register system.

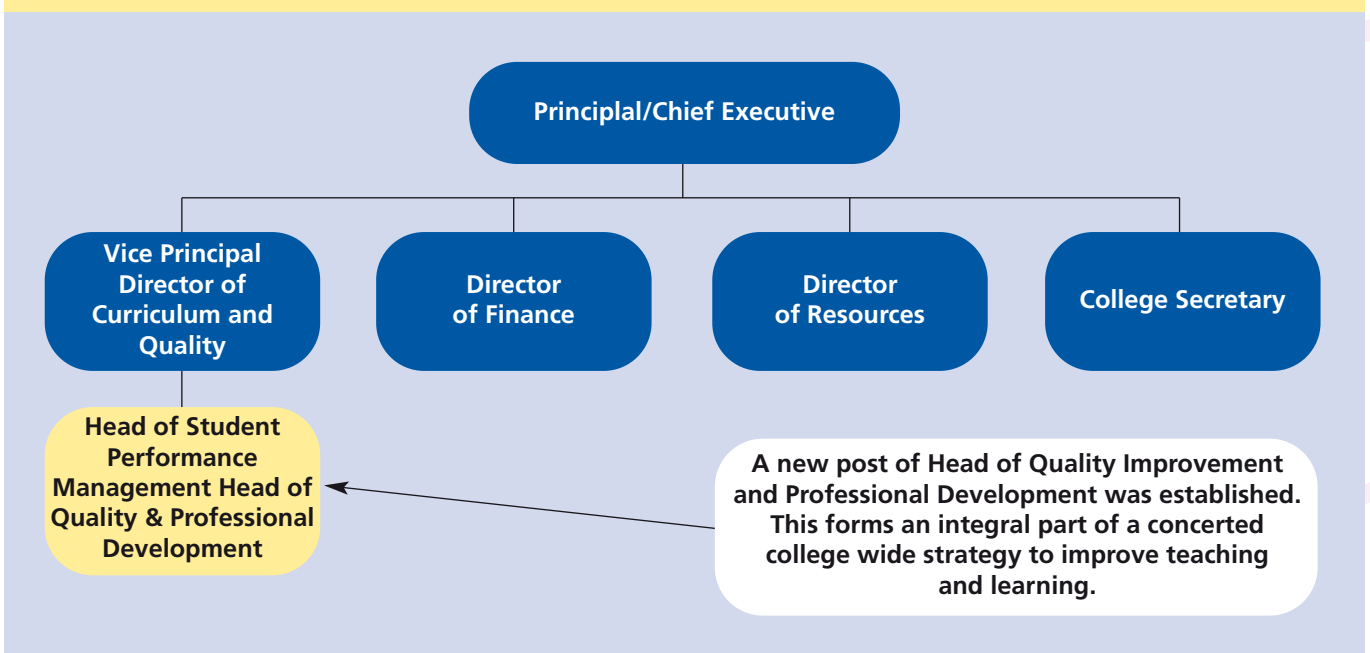
How improvement has been integrated across the organisation

- The College’s overall A-Level pass rate is 99.7%. 37 out of 40 A-Level courses, 10 advanced vocational courses and 8 out of 9 BTEC First Diploma courses all scored 100%
- there is excellent communication throughout the college. The principal holds a weekly briefing session for all staff. Part-time staff who are unable to attend receive a newsletter
- the college holds eight/nine staff development days throughout the year. These sessions are used to share best practice and to address issues and developments.

Link with development planning

- There is a strong focus on continuous improvement. Managers and teachers have a detailed knowledge of the performance of their areas and appreciate the good quality of the management information available to them. The performance management group gives a cross-college focus to improvement. Development planning and self assessment are linked and embedded in the college’s operations. Key strategies have been identified and these have had a positive impact on success rates
- the college has linked excellence in performance with the need for excellence in the quality of its learning environment. The college has a clear plan for accommodation enhancement which has provided a physical transformation. The transformation originally began in 2003 as £1.7 million was spent on a range of new buildings with the creation of a sports centre
- the college has just completed a major phase of development and refurbishment work on its main campus that has seen a total of £7 million invested. These ‘state of the art’ facilities play a key part in helping the college to continue the further enhancement of all aspects of quality.

Structure



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

The effectiveness of the steps taken by the college to promote improvement since the last inspection – Ofsted March 2007

- The college has made outstanding progress in addressing the areas for improvement identified in the last inspection
- both retention and pass rates have improved significantly
- the curriculum has been reviewed and the courses now offered have been carefully selected to meet learner needs
- the range of enrichment opportunities, including study visits abroad, has been extended enormously
- learning support arrangements are more extensive and take up has improved
- quality assurance processes are now rigorous.

Analysis and evaluation of evidence which indicates an outstanding capacity to improve

- Significantly improving success rates. Overall, success rates for learners aged 16-18 have improved significantly to 86% in 2006, which is well above the national average for sixth form colleges. A rapid rise in retention rates is a significant contributor to improved success rates. Pass rates have also improved significantly at levels 1 and 2 and remain good at level 3
- effective steps have been taken to ensure that teaching and learning observations are now more consistently graded and their main qualities recorded thoroughly
- target setting is effective at all levels. Students have challenging individual targets. The organisation has a closely defined range of organisational targets which are reviewed regularly
- managers are drawing upon a more accurate and detailed analysis of the teaching and learning in areas for which they are responsible in drawing up curriculum sections of the self assessment report
- staff turnover is low. Staff feel valued and supported. The staff that have achieved this drive for improvement are likely to be there for further stages.