

SEEVIC COLLEGE

Inspection report

Provider reference 130681

Published date June 2009

Audience	Post-sixteen
Published date	June 2009
Provider reference	130681

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.

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); and the previous inspection report (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. SEEVIC College is a large sixth form college with its main campus situated in Benfleet, Essex and a new further education campus in Basildon town centre. The college offers a more diverse curriculum than is often seen in sixth form colleges. Almost half of its students study vocational qualifications with substantial numbers studying foundation and intermediate courses. A small number of students are on work-based learning and Train to Gain programmes. The college offers courses in 14 of the 15 sector subject areas. The number of students aged 16 to 18 has grown steadily from 2,063 in 2003/04 to 2,484 in 2006/07. Students attend the college from an increasingly diverse catchment area including Southend, Castle Point, Rochford, Basildon and Thurrock. In 2007/08, some 7% of students identified themselves as coming from a minority ethnic heritage; a higher percentage than is found in the surrounding local communities. Unemployment is generally below average. The proportion of

young people achieving five high grades at GCSE, including English and mathematics in Essex and Southend, is above average; however, there is considerable variation between schools. In Thurrock, the figure is well below average. The mission of the college is: 'SEEVIC College will be responsive to the needs of the community working in partnership to promote and provide a range of high quality learning opportunities'.

Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision	Good: Grade 2
-----------------------------------	----------------------

Capacity to improve	Good: Grade 2
----------------------------	----------------------

Achievement and standards	Satisfactory: Grade 3
----------------------------------	------------------------------

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

2. The effectiveness of provision is good. Achievement and standards are satisfactory overall and some aspects are good. Students achieve well on vocational courses and make excellent progress compared with their prior attainment at GCSE. However, in 2007/08, success rates at General Certificate of Education (GCE) A and AS level declined to below average.
3. Teaching and learning are good with thorough planning and imaginative use of information learning technology (ILT). Students produce work of a good standard and take part confidently in discussions. In a minority of lessons, teaching does not address the full range of students' needs, particularly for the most able.
4. The college's response to meeting the needs and interests of students is outstanding. The diverse range of provision includes a substantial vocational offer and courses from entry to advanced level. Students' opportunities have been enhanced by the establishment of New Campus Basildon. Educational and social inclusion are good.
5. Guidance and support are good with particularly effective academic and additional learning support. Students are encouraged effectively to become independent learners and have easy access to a good range of specialist support.
6. Leadership and management are good. Courses identified as underperforming in 2007/08 have been subject to particularly close and rigorous quality improvement strategies. Early indications suggest that this has resulted in measurable improvements. The promotion of equality of opportunity is good as is students' knowledge and understanding of equality and diversity.

Capacity to improve

Good: Grade 2

7. The college's capacity to improve is good. The self-assessment report (SAR) for 2007/08 acknowledged fully the decline in success rates at GCE A and AS level and reflected this in the SAR grades. Action plans and targeted quality improvement have secured improvements in areas including attendance, retention and early examination outcomes. Inspectors agreed with the higher grades awarded in the updated SAR. Managers, teachers and governors have concentrated appropriately on courses identified as underperforming and demonstrate determination and confidence in their ability to improve outcomes. Most curriculum areas are well managed with staff clearly accountable for students' outcomes. College resources are targeted on improvement and financial management is good.

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

8. The college has made good progress since the last inspection. Punctuality and attendance have improved and are now good. Feedback to students on how to improve their work is now much better and opportunities for staff to contribute to decision making have been increased. The strengths identified at the last inspection in the promotion of equal opportunities, productive partnerships and enthusiastic and courteous students have been maintained. However, the wide variation in students' progress based on their prior attainment remains an area for further improvement.

Key strengths

- good success rates on vocational courses
- students' excellent progress on level 3 vocational courses
- very good development of independent learning skills
- particularly effective academic and additional learning support
- outstanding response to the needs and interests of students
- effective leadership and management of quality improvement.

Areas for improvement

The college should address:

- below average success rates at GCE A and AS level
- students' poor progress compared to their prior attainment in some GCE A-level subjects
- the minority of teaching where students are insufficiently challenged and stretched.

Main findings

Achievement and standards

Satisfactory: Grade 3

9. Achievement and standards are satisfactory and some aspects are good. This concurs with the college self-assessment report. Success rates at levels 2 and 3 for students aged 16 to 18 studying vocational courses are good and improving. Despite a decline in 2007/08, success rates at level 1 remain above average. Value-added measures show the significant number of students studying vocational courses at level 3 make excellent progress compared to their prior attainment at GCSE. Different groups achieve similar success rates, including those in receipt of additional learning support. Many students produce work of a good standard and take part confidently in discussions.
10. Success rates at GCE A and AS level have improved steadily in the years up to 2006/07. However, in 2007/08, they declined to below average at both levels, particularly at AS level. The college has taken vigorous and targeted action to improve outcomes and early indications, including attendance, retention and early examination results, indicate that these measures have improved outcomes. It is, however, too early to judge the full impact of quality improvement in this area. Most students studying GCE A and AS level courses make satisfactory progress compared to their prior attainment but there are wide variations between subjects with students making poorer progress in some subjects. Progression between levels, and in particular from AS level to GCE A level, is very high and the vast majority of students progress from level 3 courses to higher education or employment.

Quality of provision

Good: Grade 2

11. The quality of provision is good. This matches the college's self-assessment. Teaching and learning are good. Improvements to teaching and learning are grounded firmly in a robust lesson observation process. Most students are engaged actively in interesting and well planned lessons. Information learning technology (ILT) is used creatively to check learning and enliven lessons. Teachers give clear guidance on the progress students make at their half-termly reviews and they act rapidly to help those who are not making the progress expected. Many students receive excellent feedback which helps them improve. The college has identified that a minority of teaching does not meet the needs of all students fully. In these lessons, learning is not planned sufficiently well to challenge the most able to achieve the highest standards of which they are capable.
12. All students are initially assessed. Individual additional support is provided promptly to those identified as needing it either through this assessment or later in their studies. Students' progress is checked regularly and they have clear targets for improvement. Teachers keep detailed records that ensure these students receive relevant help whenever they need it. Success rates for those receiving support are similar to the rates for other students.

13. The college's response to meeting the needs and interests of students is outstanding. The range of courses is extensive. Level 1 provision has increased and the college piloted the development of the foundation learning tier successfully. Provision to meet the needs of individual students is particularly good including those who are gifted and talented. Links with local schools are very productive and projects, such as the young apprenticeship programme and the development of new diplomas with local work-based learning providers, have been successful. Employer engagement is excellent. The establishment of the Commercial Development Unit (CDU) after an extensive review of employer-related provision has built on established employer links providing work experience for some 1,200 students a year. Social and educational inclusion are good. The further development of apprenticeships, Train to Gain provision and New Campus Basildon (NCB) are extending choices for adults and younger learners particularly well. Enrichment activities are wide ranging, clearly linked to Every Child Matters (ECM) themes, promoted particularly well to students and participation is high. Progression rates through course levels into employment and higher education are very high and student destinations are monitored closely. The college is a welcoming, safe, yet stimulating environment where success is celebrated and students enjoy attending.
14. Guidance and support for students are good. Group tutorials are focused well on the ECM themes. Tutors respond promptly to requests for further development of employability skills, study skills and financial literacy. Individual tutorials focus particularly effectively on supporting learning and developing students' skills as independent learners. Tutors coach students in ways of communicating with their teachers. This helps students to take responsibility for identifying the skills they need to improve their performance. Tutors and students learn to write specific and measurable targets. Students at both sites benefit from easy access to a range of specialist support, including counselling, health advice and careers guidance. In addition, students with particular barriers to learning are encouraged to attend courses which develop their social and communication skills.
15. A comprehensive interview and induction process helps students, including adults and those from the new campus, to make a smooth transition to college. Good collaboration with partners, including the Connexions service and Aim Higher, supports students in making well-informed choices about their destinations after college.

Leadership and management

Good: Grade 2

Equality of opportunity

Good: grade 2

16. Leadership and management are good. This agrees with the college's self-assessment report. The decline in GCE A and AS level success rates in 2007/08 has been the subject of rigorous quality improvement actions and early indications suggest measurable improvements. The college's strategic mission to provide diverse and flexible provision at all levels is well understood and supported by managers, staff and governors.

17. The college self-assessment report for 2007/08 presents a frank and realistic appraisal of student outcomes with lower grades reflecting the decline in success rates at GCE A and AS level. The updated self-assessment provides detailed evidence to support higher grades in key areas. Inspectors agreed with the higher grades awarded. Quality improvement strategies have been applied consistently and effectively at courses identified as underperforming. Most curriculum areas are well managed with staff clearly accountable for students' outcomes.
18. The observation of teaching and learning is accurate and effective in improving the quality of teaching and learning. Explicit links exist between observation, staff development and performance management. College managers have established successfully an attractive new facility catering for particularly vulnerable learners in an area with high levels of deprivation. Learning resources are generally good but the college building, although well maintained, is ageing. The well-developed plans for a new build are currently subject to national constraints.
19. Governance is good. Governors demonstrate very good knowledge of the standards achieved by students and receive regular reports on the impact of quality improvement. The college benefits from their broad range of skills and particularly detailed local knowledge. Financial management and value for money are good. The college complies with the current government requirements for safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.
20. The promotion of equal opportunities is good. Equality and diversity policies, procedures and action plans are clear, comprehensive and challenging, including the single equality scheme. The college is compliant with the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000. Arrangements relating to equality and diversity impact assessments are comprehensive, leading to closely monitored actions for improvement. Success rates are analysed usefully by gender, disability, ethnicity and age and there are no significant differences between groups of students. The participation rates of minority ethnic students are increasing and are above average compared to the local community. Provision at New Campus Basildon has engaged learners successfully who were not in education, employment or training. Access to accommodation has improved and the college is now compliant with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 2005. Staff routinely access a range of equality and diversity training. Students' rights and responsibilities in relation to equality and diversity are introduced well at induction and reinforced through tutorials, whole college activities, posters, displays and in lessons. Students' knowledge and understanding of equality and diversity are good.

Learners' achievement

Table 1

Success rates on mainstream level 1 long qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2006 to 2008, compared to 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
All Long - Level 1	05/06	533	85	71	14	146	71	57	14
	06/07	625	90	73	17	13	85	64	21
	07/08*	559	79			19	84		
GNVQs/ AVCEs	05/06	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	06/07	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	07/08								
NVQs	05/06	2	100	...	...	...	...	...	...
	06/07	1	100	...	...	...	...	...	...
	07/08								
Other	05/06	531	85	71	14	146	71	57	14
	06/07	624	90	72	18	13	85	64	21
	07/08*	559	79			19	84		

* college data 2007/08

Table 2

Success rates on mainstream level 2 long qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2006 to 2008, compared to 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
All Long - Level 2	05/06	956	79	78	1	127	65	65	0
	06/07	888	81	82	-1	142	67	65	2
	07/08*	909	82			104	77		
GCSEs	05/06	413	81	82	-1	33	94	67	27
	06/07	398	85	83	2	35	86	68	18
	07/08	403	84			18	67		
GNVQs/ AVCEs	05/06	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	06/07	2	100	78	22	...	...	...	...
	07/08*	8	50						
NVQs	05/06	12	92	...	...	28	75	69	6
	06/07	13	69	...	...	22	86	71	15
	07/08*	7	57			21	95		
Other	05/06	531	77	70	7	66	45	62	-17
	06/07	475	77	79	-2	85	54	62	-8
	07/08*	491	81			64	73		

* college data 2007/08

Table 3

Success rates on mainstream level 3 long qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2006 to 2008, compared to 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
All Long - Level 3	05/06	5554	83	84	-1	139	64	65	-1
	06/07	6159	83	85	-2	110	68	69	-1
	07/08*	6644	80				70		
A/A2 Levels	05/06	1886	89	93	-4	20	100	78	22
	06/07	2020	90	93	-3	10	50	80	-30
	07/08*	2345	88				91		
AS Levels	05/06	3268	80	79	1	8	100	58	42
	06/07	3681	80	81	-1	4	25	61	-36
	07/08*	3753	74				56		
GNVQs/ AVCEs	05/06	177	69	77	-8	...	...	...	...
	06/07	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
	07/08								
NVQs	05/06	3	67	...	...	23	57	64	-7
	06/07	3	67	...	...	41	76	72	4
	07/08*	6	72			26	88		
Other	05/06	220	80	79	1	88	55	62	-7
	06/07	455	78	80	-2	55	69	66	3
	07/08*	540	81			58	53		

* college data 2007/08