

Partnership Challenge

Groby Community College



2-3 April 2014

Following on from a successful project in 2012-13 four local secondary schools cooperated to continue a project of mutual observations and quality assurance in each other's schools and colleges.

The group of four schools are:

Bosworth Academy (14-19)

Brookvale High School (11-14)

Groby Community College (14-19)

Winstanley Community College (11-14)

As part of the Partnership Challenge programme, each institution will be visited by a group of up to four peers, drawn from the four principals and members of their senior leadership teams, over a period of two days. The team is coordinated by an external consultant.

This summary report is a record of the findings of the visit by the team to Groby Community College on 2-3 April 2014, drawn up after reporting the team's findings to the senior leadership team at the college.

The report is in four sections

1. Achievement
2. Quality of Teaching
3. Behaviour
4. Leadership and Management

During the visit the team observed lessons, scheduled by the Principal, all of which were jointly observed with members of the Groby leadership team. The visiting team undertook discussions with students, middle and senior leaders; the Principal was present for all team discussions.

The Challenge Team

Katie Rush	Brookvale High School
Rick Moore	Bosworth Academy
Kathleen Baxter	Bosworth Academy
Debby Field	Winstanley Community College
John Taylor	Consultant

The previous Ofsted report was completed in February 2013. The areas for improvement in this report were:

- Eliminate the small minority of teaching that requires improvement and increase the proportion that is outstanding by:
 - planning work that is always closely matched to different ability levels of all students in the class and providing activities that stretch the most-able students
 - introducing new information in ways that the students find engaging and motivating, thereby increasing their interest in their lessons.
- Extend the partnership work between home and college to improve attendance, particularly for those students whose circumstances may make them vulnerable.

Achievement

Overall the team judged Achievement to be good

Strengths

- Students acquire knowledge and develop understanding quickly and securely in a wide range of subjects as seen during lesson observations. In Key Stage 4 the students' progress has improved over the last three years due to the improvement in the quality of teaching.
- Overall the students' attainment at the end of Year 11 has improved over the last three years.
- Students' progress in science is particularly strong. Most groups of Key Stage 4 students, including those for whom the pupil premium provides support, make significantly faster progress in science than the national average.
- The college's data suggests that, for progress in English, there has been a significant improvement this year, compared to last year. In Years 10 and 11 all ability groups are on track to achieve higher than national figures for summer 2014 and summer 2015. Last year the proportions of Year 11 students making expected progress in English were above national averages for the lower ability, in line with national averages for middle ability, and below for higher ability. The proportions exceeding expected progress in English were in line with national figures for the middle ability, and below national average for the lower and the higher ability.
- The college's data suggests that, in mathematics, the progress of students in the current Year 10 and Year 11 is improving, and getting closer to the national averages. In mathematics the proportions for Year 11 students making expected or exceeding expected progress, were below national averages for all ability groups last year. The middle ability group was furthest below the national average.
- For pupils for whom the pupil premium provides support, the proportions making and exceeding expected progress are improving, with English showing a much stronger picture than in mathematics.
- The college has a strong commitment to promoting equal opportunities and has recently re-focused its initiatives to increase the pace of closing the gap in attainment between those students who are entitled to pupil premium support and their peers. The impact of these initiatives has yet to be assessed.
- Students who are disabled or have special educational needs achieve well due to the close monitoring of their progress and well-targeted and effective support. Teachers are provided with effective support to help these students and the college regularly reviews their progress and needs.
- Progress in Key Stage 5 is very strong both in academic and vocational courses. Overall students' progress is significantly above the national average.

Areas for Development

- Rapidly reduce the gap in attainment between students entitled to the pupil premium and their peers by:
 - assessing the impact of the re-focused initiatives
 - adapting the support to best meet their needs.
- Raise students attainment in mathematics by:
 - ensuring a more consistent approach to teaching mathematics in the college and its major feeder high school through greater collaboration
 - monitoring the impact of the numeracy strategy on raising mathematical achievement.

Quality of Teaching

The quality of Teaching was judged good with some outstanding features.

Total number of observations of learning was 53. Most observations were between 20 -25 min in length and jointly observed, by one of the team and a member of senior or middle leadership team. Discussion on the observations was held afterwards and an agreed judgement was arrived at.

	No of observations	Requires Improvement	Requires Improvement %	Good	Good %	Outstanding	Outstanding %
KS4	36	5	14%	17	47%	14	39%
KS5	17	0	0	9	53%	8	47%
Total	53	5	9%	26	49%	22	41%

- The quality of teaching has improved due to the accurate monitoring which provides effective feedback to teachers and the well-focused professional development which provides the teachers with tools to improve their skills.
- Teachers have consistently high expectations of all students and create a positive climate for learning with an emphasis on challenge for all abilities. Students in a higher ability Year 10 science class described enthusiastically how they are regularly presented with questions from AS papers.
- Learning objectives and success criteria are precise, focus on outcomes, are systematically shared with learners and referred to throughout the lesson. As a result, students are clear about what they are learning and why.
- In the vast majority of lessons good pace and a variety of activities enable students to sustain concentration, remain engaged and results in the students making good progress.
- Teachers monitor student progress in lessons through regular questioning to check understanding. However some opportunities to use the questioning to deepen the students' understanding are missed.
- Students know how they are doing and what they need to do to improve. Feedback in books is constructive and detailed. The introduction of the 'student response' stamp, promoting dialogue between teacher and student, is not yet constantly applied in all areas.
- Feedback from students, both in lessons and from student panels, shows that they enjoy their lessons and recognise the lengths that their teachers go to in supporting their learning through additional sessions during lunchtime and after school.
- Consistency in the good quality and regular setting of appropriate homework is monitored through 'Show My Homework'. This is supported by feedback from parents, where most parents agreed that homework is appropriate for their child; (an increase from last year's survey).
- All teachers are challenged to reflect on their current practice and ways to improve through initiatives such as Action Research. The college has worked hard to foster a culture which emphasises self- improvement for all.
- There is an expectation that teachers make good use of pedagogical initiatives such as SOLO, Looking For Learning and Building Learning Power in their everyday teaching. Teachers are encouraged to share best practice through Action Research presentations, the Drive team, weekly teaching and learning briefings and the college Teaching and Learning Blog.

Groby Community College Partnership Challenge 2-3 April 2014

- Newly qualified teachers, and those teachers at an early stage in their teaching careers, are carefully supported and closely monitored, whilst more experienced staff members have access to relevant and high quality professional development.

Areas for Development

- Ensure that students' responses to the teachers' feedback ("targets") are explicit and consistent across all faculty areas so they improve their work.
- Further develop questioning techniques, and in particular, targeted/directed questions which probe and promote students deeper understanding.
- Ensure that all teachers use modelling effectively so that students are clear about what they need to do to achieve best outcomes. This development is particularly important to close the gap more rapidly for D/SEN and disadvantaged students.

Behaviour

Behaviour was judged as good much of which was outstanding.

Strengths

Students' attitude to learning is good and in some cases outstanding. They show a thirst for knowledge in some lessons. Students say that disruptions are rare. As a result of this students learn well in their lessons.

- Students are prepared for their lessons and on time. The data shows that punctuality and lateness is rarely an issue. This enables lessons to start promptly and encourages a brisk pace and effective learning.
- Students are proud to be a student at Groby.
- There is a good level of analysis of students' behaviour and this informs effective interventions and maintains the high level of behaviour throughout the college.
- Students' behaviour outside of lessons is almost always impeccable. Students are punctual to lessons and their behaviour and language on the corridor is superb.
- There is a zero tolerance approach to bullying. Students feel safe in this college. Students feel that when bullying does occur it is usually through cyber bullying that has begun outside of school. Post 16 felt the buddying system helps to combat this too.
- Attendance data is improving. The outreach team have set an internal target of 94%.
- Behaviour systems are rigorous and external exclusions have halved since last year.

Areas for Development

- Improve the attendance of students entitled to the pupil premium.
- Improve the post 16 attendance by implementing a more robust monitoring system.
- Reduce the proportion of students entitled to pupil premium and those from out of catchment who are excluded from the college

Leadership and Management

Leadership and management of the school is good

Strengths

- College leaders share a clear vision for the improvement and have demonstrated a capacity to bring about the required changes. Middle leaders have shown a strong commitment to this vision through the good to outstanding initiative which underpins the leadership of their faculties.
- Key priorities for improvement have been identified by SLT (Challenge and Closing the Gaps) and these have started to become embedded within faculties through middle leaders and are clearly part of everyday practice informing the planning of class teachers. This has resulted in improving the teaching across the college.
- The literacy policy has been effective at raising the profile of literacy across the college and is evident in lesson planning. The numeracy policy is at an earlier stage of implementation.
- There is a clear whole school awareness of closing the gap for students entitled to the pupil premium. Strategies such as the use of maths tutors and focused individual interventions are beginning to have an impact and although the gap is wider than the national gap it is slowly narrowing.
- Leaders have established a culture of high aspiration and expectation within the college. Students are set challenging aspirational targets that are negotiated between staff and students and are regularly reviewed and renegotiated.
- Leaders have a sharp focus on developing teaching and learning. There is a co-ordinated high quality professional development programme that addresses the needs of staff at every stage of their career. All staff are involved in action research in order to develop and improve teaching. Performance management is designed to support teachers' improvement and the impact is clear as the majority of teaching is good or better.
- There is an effective whole school quality assurance process that employs a range of strategies to ensure progress. Middle leaders have a key role in leading this and it has resulted in a high level of commitment to the process.
- Rigorous monitoring of students' performance allows leaders to identify areas for improvement both at whole school and faculty level. The tracking of performance enables leaders to identify key areas of underachievement and to employ targeted strategies to stop students falling further behind.
- Parents' views are taken regularly and they show a high level of confidence in the leadership of the school (92%) and parents feel that their child is making good progress (89%) and are well taught (91%).
- The school's self-evaluation is accurate and reflects the current situation within the school and forms a good basis for college development.
- There is a high level of collaboration between the college and high school which has had a positive impact on the transition of students and on their achievement.

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Areas for Development

- Evaluate the impact of different strategies and initiatives to ensure that they are having the required effect on student achievement. Especially those initiatives focused on :
 - reducing the gap in attainment for those students entitled to pupil premium funding
 - improving the students' literacy and numeracy skills.
- Increase the effective collaboration with the high school so that:
 - students' achievement in mathematics improves
 - the gap in attainment for those students entitled to pupil premium funding is reduced.