

The Programme:

This programme follows on from another successful Partnership Challenge programme across Leicestershire. Participating secondary schools cooperate in mutual quality assurance by undertaking lesson observations and discussions with senior leaders, governors, staff and pupils in each other's schools and colleges.

The group of schools taking part in this programme are:

Brockington College
Groby Community College
Leysland High School

Robert Smyth Academy
Thomas Estley Community College

The Participants:

Two members of the senior leadership teams from each institution were given an introductory session on the methodology behind the programme and the lessons learned from previous programmes.

The team that undertook the partnership challenge at Brockington College were:

Mandy Bearne	Assistant Headteacher	Groby Community College
Mandi Collins	Vice Principal	Thomas Estley Community College
Sue Jones	Principal	Robert Smyth Academy
Vicki Cropp	Senior Leader	Redmoor Academy (One Day)
John Taylor	TaylorGill Ltd	Educational Consultant (Ofsted Trained)

Methodology:

The two-day visit consisted of 51 lesson observations, each about 20 to 25 minutes long, and the vast majority of staff in the College were observed. Almost all of the lesson observations were done jointly with College staff. Individual lessons were graded and feedback was offered to all staff observed, on the particular strengths seen and any areas for development.

Members of the team had 10 meetings with staff with different responsibilities, recently or newly qualified teachers, one meeting with the governors and two meetings with the pupils. Pupils' work, especially in English and mathematics, was scrutinised, jointly with the Faculty Heads. For some of these meetings link governors were present to observe.

Evidence from these observations and meetings, together with other data and information provided, was discussed at the team meetings, for which the College Principal and Vice Principal were present. Strengths and areas for development were agreed in each of the five main areas covered by the latest Ofsted inspection framework, and judgements were agreed based on the evaluation schedule.

Verbal feedback was given to governors, the Senior Leadership Team and the Principal at the end of the two days.

Leadership and Management

The leadership and management of the College are judged to be grade 1.

- Strong leadership ensures that the well embedded ethos in the College permeates all its activities and ensure the pupils develop into well rounded individuals. The leaders and governors provide a high degree of challenge to ensure robust systems are used to monitor the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Middle leaders are fully supportive of the senior leaders and are 'all moving in the same direction'. Consistency of approach and a clear understanding of how to get there has ensured the college is maintaining its high standards of teaching.
- Effective development of leadership at all levels has increased the College's capacity in this area, and enabled it to manage the recent changes in extending the age range to 16, whilst still maintaining standards.
- Self-evaluation is honest, accurate and non-complacent. It shows the leaders have a good knowledge of the College's strengths and has provided a sound basis for the development plan and made sure there is a clear focus on the areas that need improving. There is shared ownership between leaders and Governors of the self-evaluation and the College development plan.
- A high proportion of newly qualified teachers have been taken on this year, and all have been extremely well supported; this has led to many quickly becoming talented and effective teachers.
- Rigorous performance management of teachers has tackled the few cases of underperformance by providing effective, targeted, support.
- Leaders work to monitor the progress of disadvantaged pupils is rigorous. This results in underperforming pupils being identified and given effective target support. As a result, the gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers is closing, especially at key stage 3.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced; the spiritual reflection time each morning is highly effective at developing the pupils' skills of self-reflection. The impact of this is seen in many lessons, through the mature manner pupils use when commenting on each other's work and their excellent attitude to learning. The high proportion of Y10 pupils who follow a vocational element at South Leicestershire College are well supported and the quality of the provision and their progress is closely monitored by the leaders.
- Very good advice is provided for pupils through the excellent links with post-16 providers, including universities and further education providers, who visit on a regular basis, the mock business interviews with Year 10 pupils and the careers programme embedded in the PSHE lessons.
- **The Governance of the College**
 - The governors have an accurate picture of the College's strengths and weaknesses. Their committee systems enable them to effectively monitor pupil achievement and financial expenditure through the time of change.
 - They provide clear strategic guidance to the school, by ensuring that any decision to adopt a new initiative will clearly enhance the College's ethos and values.
 - Appropriate challenge by the governors is used to ensure best outcomes are achieved from the decisions made by the College leaders.
 - Governors are aware of the impact of the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils and the gap is narrowing between their achievement and other pupils in the College.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Staff and governor training have been completed, including the safer recruitment training. The trained designated persons meet

regularly and keep a record of referrals. Good liaison with outside agencies ensures appropriate action is taken. Staff have received training related to extremism and radicalisation.

Areas for development:

- Increase the leadership capacity, by giving more opportunities to the capable middle leaders to undertake a wider range of tasks during the time of change, so senior leaders can maintain a focus on strategic issues.
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Quality of Teaching and Assessment

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is judged to be grade 1-

- Teachers demonstrate a good knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach. This has consequently enabled a smooth transition to delivery of the key stage four curriculum. Pupils' understanding was checked systematically in the majority of lessons observed. Common misconceptions are identified well and corrected through prompt and effective oral and written feedback.
- Effective planning is used to help pupils learn well, and most lesson time is used very productively. This is particularly the case in Year 10 lessons, where progress is always clearly linked to GCSE success criteria. Almost all pupils can explain confidently their next step and what they need to do to get there, and pupils progress well as a result. In some lessons, lower ability learners make outstanding learning gains.
- Teachers manage pupils' behaviour very effectively with clear rules and routines, consistently enforced in all areas of the curriculum. These contribute to the achievement of clear learning gains. Excellent engagement in the vast majority of lessons is supported by good quality relationships and high expectations.
- Linked to the ethos of 'Living life to the full', and successful focus on reflective personal development within the school, as evidenced in consistently outstanding 'spiritual reflection' lessons observed, pupils typically demonstrate independent thinking, ownership of their own learning, make choices about their learning and are reflective in the majority of their lessons. They make mature and supportive comments on other pupils' work.
- Pupils take pride in their work and enjoy learning. In the best lessons, they are curious, interested, resilient learners who take risks, explore possibilities and learn from mistakes.
- Written feedback is embedded practice, with the majority of comments by teachers well targeted around specific areas for development. In some cases, there is evidence of pupil feedback and ongoing dialogue.
- Homework opportunities are planned and structured to enhance learning in the majority of subject areas and are appropriate to the age and stage of pupils.
- Reading, writing and communication are embedded well across the curriculum, equipping pupils with the necessary skills to support progress.
- There is clear evidence of learning activities which reflect and value the diversity of pupils' experiences and provide pupils with a comprehensive understanding of people and communities beyond their own immediate experience.
- In the best lessons we saw good pace, high expectations, well embedded routines, effective differentiation and probing questioning. This led directly to high levels of engagement, confident

independent learning and rapid progress. Even where all of these elements were not present and progress was less marked, scrutiny of work books, folders and assessments showed that pupils across all subjects are making good progress over time.

- In the few cases where teaching and learning are less good, this is often linked to the large proportion of newly qualified teachers, some of whom have not yet developed to deliver consistently high quality learning experiences.

Areas for Development

- Incorporate planned stretch for more able pupils consistently across whole school practice through deeper questioning and explicit challenge questions and activities.
 - Monitor pupil response and reaction to written feedback, allowing adequate and regular time for reflection and development to build best practice in the school consistently across all departments.
 - Ensure that pace of learning is not slowed due to over use of teacher talk and lower expectations of work rate, evidenced in a few lessons observed.
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Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare

Personal Development and Welfare

The College's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is judged grade 1.

- Excellent communication systems enable staff to be kept fully informed about the work of the pastoral team.
- School leaders work hard to ensure that pupils feel safe and secure and the college has robust monitoring procedures in place.
- Pupils say they feel safe and bullying of any form is uncommon. Reported incidents are firmly dealt with. Pupils are well informed on how to stay safe and understand the harm that bullying can cause. There are good links on the College's website that signpost a variety of ways in which pupils experiencing emotional problems can receive support. Pupils throughout the school see the relevance of the 'voice box' and 'Kooth' and recognised that these services are very supportive.
- The spiritual reflection programme is outstanding and provides pupils with a value system that enables them to behave with emotional intelligence; it also engenders a real positive attitude to learning.
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is high quality and well developed. It is delivered by a team of skilled staff and incorporates a range of activities that engage pupils such as drama productions and role play. The Enrichment day supports the PSHCE curriculum and provides different foci relevant to each year group. British values are woven through the curriculum and pupils show good attitudes towards people from other faiths and cultures.
- The provision for pupils with special education needs or disabilities is excellent. The special education needs or disabilities area provides a supportive nurturing environment that enables pupils to grow in confidence and flourish. Small group intervention for pupils with SEND is of a high quality and is having an impact on outcomes.
- Fixed term exclusions overall are low but have risen slightly in Year 10. This is because leaders have been proactive and have wanted to send a clear message to Year 10 pupils around the increased behaviour expectations of pupils beginning GCSE courses.

- Attendance is good and above national averages. It is carefully monitored in terms of different groups of pupils and a full time attendance officer coordinates the work of different agencies in supporting pupil attendance.

Behaviour

The behaviour of pupils is judged to be 1.

- Pupils enjoy coming to school and display excellent attitudes to learning and behaviour for learning that have a positive impact on their outcomes. The behaviour policy is well embedded and ensures that behaviour issues are dealt with swiftly and effectively. A highly skilled pastoral team work in partnership with pupils, teachers and parents to support learners who experience difficulties in accessing learning. Brockington's ethos of 'living life to the full' is certainly evident in the behaviour of pupils and the expectations of teachers.
- Pupils show confidence in communicating their ideas, they take pride in their work, are punctual and ready to learn.
- There is a large proportion of new and inexperienced staff who have been well supported by a bespoke CPD programme and as a result behaviour issues for new staff have been effectively dealt with. Leaders have plans to replicate this with the new cohort of staff joining in September in order for them to have access to similar levels of support.
- A system of rewards and sanctions give pupils a clear understanding of how they are expected to behave.

Areas for Development

- There is measurable impact of the work that is being done to support learners with low levels of literacy. The College needs to ensure that the same is true for numeracy.
 - Provision for vulnerable and disaffected Key Stage 4 pupils who are unable to access the GCSE curriculum.
 - The development of information, advice and guidance for pupils going into Year 11 to ensure that they can make informed choices about their next steps.
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Outcomes for Pupils

The outcomes for pupils were judged to be Grade 1-.

The strength and distinctive nature of the College ethos has a direct impact on pupil outcomes and the progress that they make.

- Throughout all year groups and in most subjects, including maths and English, pupils make strong progress in their learning and achievement from their different starting points. The College ethos and motto 'learning to live life to the full' is shared and understood by all. This leads to high expectations from staff and pupils and the ability for pupils to embrace independent learning, resulting in accelerated progress and improving outcomes.
- The use of data has become more refined. Monitoring and systematic tracking is well embedded across the College. The senior leadership team work closely with middle leaders to ensure that all teams are competent and confident in handling and interpreting the data and that this is then used

directly to address any underachievement. Best practice in terms of outcomes and leadership is shared across all subject areas.

- Attainment and achievement are broadly in line with county and national averages and consistently above at Key Stage 3. At Key Stage 4, forecasts are at least in line with national averages for expected and above expected progress in most subjects. This is an area of high scrutiny as the College moves towards its first GCSE examinations. There is the additional uncertainty around the new 1-9 assessment system in English and Maths, however the College have taken these changes into account, and use 5-9 forecasts in English and Maths, to predict 2017 attainment and progress outcomes.
- Effective use of performance data at both key stages and frequent assessment points quickly highlight any underperformance. Post-assessment briefings, involving senior and middle leaders, are effective in signposting pupils to bespoke interventions, (small group Interventions), where pupils receive targeted support and make rapid gains.
- The improvement of literacy skills has also been a key focus across all year groups and many pupils have made rapid progress in literacy as a result of targeted intervention and booster programmes. Where underperformance remains, notably with some most able boys, careful consideration is being given to teaching materials and groupings in order to boost engagement and achievement.
- The strategic use of Pupil Premium and SEND funding is having a direct impact on pupil outcomes, particularly at KS3. The progress across the curriculum of disadvantaged and SEND pupils is improving towards that of other pupils as a result of a whole college focus on key groups and myriad intervention strategies. Interventions are carefully designed to meet the needs of the learners and subject teachers and high quality support staff are used to ensure that the interventions are effective. Intervention programmes are subject to robust quality assurance.
- Preparation for the Key Stage 4 curriculum and achievement has been a priority across the College. Leaders have ensured that KS4 and examination expertise is shared across faculties to increase confidence in forecasting and predicting outcomes accurately. Moderation of these assessment points and the use of a range of external partners for professional development continues to be a priority as the college approaches its first external examinations.
- Observations of Year 10 lessons, in both core and option subjects, shows clear evidence that teachers have a good understanding of assessment criteria and are successfully challenging pupils to meet their target grades. Preparation of pupils for their core science exam has been meticulously planned, including close communication with parents and advice on preparation and revision.

Areas for development:

- As well as the established intervention programmes, a greater focus on personalisation, for key groups within the classroom, will more rapidly close the gap where there are still pockets of underachievement, for example high ability boys in English and disadvantaged pupils at KS4.
 - A whole College focus on key pedagogy, notably differentiation, questioning and pupil response to feedback, will allow all pupils to make more rapid gains both in lessons and over time and will ensure that any remaining gaps narrow more rapidly.
 - Continue to focus on KS4 progress and outcomes by using fine grades at each assessment point, to increase accuracy of forecasts, and continue to moderate tracking data both internally and through external partners and training.
 - Continued quality assurance of external provision and pupil progress on vocational courses.
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