

Inclusion in FE

Joseph Chamberlain College



What the Judges Said

We are delighted to see a comprehensive list of activities showing progression and evidence for this award. We are encouraged by the fact you have in place a variety of systems and support.

Context

Joseph Chamberlain College is a sixth form college (SFC) in inner-city Birmingham catering for 2000 16-18 year old students and, unusually for a SFC, approximately 600 adult learners. Also, unusually for a SFC it delivers a high proportion of vocational qualifications, approximately 50% of its provision. 80% of its 16-18 provision is delivered at level 3.

The majority of students do not have English as their first language. A recent survey showed 85 different non-English languages are spoken by students. 98% of students are from ethnic minority backgrounds which is significantly higher than the city other colleges in the UK. Socio-economic performance indicator data shows that, with an average Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) score of 52.0, the highest of any SFC in the country, the College has the highest levels of deprivation locally, regionally and nationally. The College ranks in the top 1% for 16-18 and 19+ students in terms of deprivation levels. Before the withdrawal of Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA), 84% of all 16-18 students claimed the highest rate of allowance and continue to do so under the new Bursary Scheme. As with the 16-

18 year olds, the vast majority of adult learners live in Super Output areas of high multiple deprivation, as recognised by Birmingham City Council.

Applications to the College come from pupils of over eighty secondary schools in the City and further afield and more than 4000 prospective students applied to the College for places last year.

The percentage of young people gaining five GCSEs at A* to C, including English and Mathematics from many main feeder schools is considerably lower than the national average.

The average GCSE point entry scores of students entering Joseph Chamberlain College at Level 3 is consistently lower than the national average for SFCs (5.7 – mostly Cs with some Bs at GCSE against a national average for SFCs of approximately 6.1 – mostly Bs at GCSE).

Joseph Chamberlain SFC, believes that young people and adults of all abilities deserve the opportunity to better their lives through academic study and progression to HE, employment or improved life skills. To this end, it is highly inclusive and does not operate a selective and restrictive admissions policy.

In April 2013, following a number of years of declining success rates, in some cases 20% below national averages, the College was at risk of being judged *inadequate* in its Ofsted inspection. However, following the Principal's bold and foresighted whole-college restructure at the start of that academic year, including replacement of the majority of the senior leadership team, the College was able to demonstrate to inspectors that it had recognised all of its areas for improvement and had put plans in place to tackle them. The College was graded as *requires improvement* across all aspects.

The re-inspection that took place 17 months later graded the College's overall effectiveness as **good** and the effectiveness of leadership and management as **outstanding**.

In 2016 the College achieved the highest A level pass rate, 99%, of any college in Birmingham or Solihull for the third year running. Progress measures for some subject groups were the highest of any in the country. Btec pass rates were at 99%. In 2016 90% of students progressed to university against a SFC national average of 67%. On success rates alone the College was 14 out of 94 SFCs, many of those

above with exclusive intakes. These outstanding achievements saw College feature in the annual Parliamentary Review, which was forwarded by the Chancellor of the Exchequer and it was shortlisted for the Times Educational Supplement Sixth Form College of the Year.

Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LLDD) benefited from this remarkable upturn. After lagging significantly behind non-LLDD performance for some years, LLDD performance is now in line with non-LLDD across all measures.

Entry

A Journey to Excellence

In 2014 the support given to learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LLDD) required improvement. The success rate of LLDD was significantly below headline College rates and the national average. The College re-inspection report noted:

Students with learning difficulties achieve less well compared to other students and the difference has increased since the previous inspection.

In 2013 16-18 LLDD success rates were 76% against a College 16-18 non-LLDD rate of 83%. The following year whilst non-LLDD rates rose by 5% to 88% the LLDD rate rose by only 1% to 77%, meaning the gap had widened to 11%.

A radical new approach was required; the College repositioned additional learning support (ALS) responsibility. It was removed from Student Services and placed within the remit of the Assistant Principal for Learning and Standards. A fresh and innovative strategy was developed to align with the College's new 2013 to 2016 strategic plan, *Establishing Excellence for Every Student*. This drove some key interventions.

- **Culture change** – ALS was re-branded as Inclusive Learning (IL) to emphasise that support is part of the whole learning experience and not an 'addition'. This was promoted by an internal and external marketing campaign that highlighted the support available and the advantages for students who accessed this.

- **Extra identification points** – every prospective student was questioned about possible additional needs not only on application, but at interview and enrolment, whether they had declared at application or not. Links with schools through personal contact with special educational needs co-ordinators (SENCOs) were firmly established and the College formed a collaborative network including events for SENCOs to better share of information and support student transition from school to the College.
- **Referral to IL team** – the IL team became involved in the interview and enrolment process, with all LLDD being met by the support team during each process to assess and discuss needs and subsequent support. Where the College holds interviews for prospective students at feeder-school sites to reduce disruption, a member of IL staff attends on every occasion.
- **Detailed individual support plans (ISPs)** – ISPs were created (online for easy access for all relevant staff – teachers, IL key worker, tutor etc.) to identify, before students start at the College, the adjustments required. ISPs identify: the nature of the need; what the teacher must do; what IL must do; what the student must do. Accessible ISPs have led to greater co-operation and discussion between teachers, tutors and IL staff about meeting individual needs.
- **Professional development** – an extensive programme of development focused on understanding and supporting specific needs has been provided, with teachers who teach students with needs being targeted and prioritised
- **Specific responsibilities** – a skills analysis of the IL team led to IL staff being assigned specific roles best suited to particular learning needs’ intervention and their skills
- **External links** – the College has developed its links with the local authority (LA) and has taken deliberate action to foster a strong relationship with the

LAs designated Pupil and Support Officer. Existing networks, such as the Birmingham South Network, are now accessed to further enhance information sharing and exchange of best practice.

- **Support reviews** – students with ISPs now have regular reviews with an IL ‘key-worker’ leading to maintaining or increasing adjustments or reducing them to promote independence
- **Data analysis** – monitoring of performance of different groups had developed since the restructure but the College has gone further and introduced systems that allow interrogation of ‘live’ data for key performance indicators, including performance of individual students at a subject assessment level. This has created the ability to provide rapid and meaningful interventions where they are most needed. More thorough interrogation of data now takes place to understand the impact of support and any patterns of underperformance.
- **Enhanced recruitment** – this is now driven by specialist skills’ needs, creating a better skills-balanced team of permanent, specialist staff and a reduction in the use of temporary, agency staff
- **Regular monitoring** – senior leader assessment reviews now occur, together with robust IL reflection and analysis, leading to meaningful and ambitious action plans

Impact

In 2015 the LLDD rate rose significantly to 88% in line with the non-LLDD rate and 10% above the national average. High success rates were maintained at 86% in 2016 in line with the College rates, still significantly above the national average of 77%. It was not only success rates that had increased.

Identification of needs went from 253 enrolments in 2013 to 665 in 2016.

Remarkably, despite this incredible rise in quality, through thoughtful timetabling and scheduling of more group rather than individual support, IL reduced its expenditure in 2016. This met yet another aim of its strategy; that of generating greater student

independence, through a programme of carefully managed reduction in support and better monitoring of the impact of IL staff interventions with individual students.

Key to the outstanding achievements of the College's inclusive learning practice has been the relentless drive for improvement. Future improvements are already planned. Central will be the specialisation of support for students who present with medical issues, particularly low level mental health issues. This will be realised by the employment of a nurse, a role new within the College. The role will provide greater support for students in managing their conditions and it will release the IL team to focus more support on LLDD which is not medically based.

The new data analysis system that has been established and allows real time analysis of data will be further enhanced. Over the next year it will be refined. Leaders of curriculum will be trained in how to access and use the data so that they can extend their monitoring and management of performance in-year, without the need for the IL Manager to initiate low level interventions. The even greater embedding of the College ethos, that responsibility for performance of *all* students lies with leaders of curriculum, will be the result; yet another indication that the College operates in an exceptionally diverse but wholly inclusive, learning environment.