



This case study will shortly be available on the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCFS) web site.

## Case Study: Havering Sixth Form College

### Ensuring excellent provision for Level 2

Havering Sixth Form College is a successful sixth form college in Hornchurch, Essex catering for 2000 students on Level 1, 2 and 3 courses. The Principal, Paul Wakeling, was keen to raise achievement for students on Level 2 courses, in particular. Nationally, provision for Level 2 was patchy, with students sometimes uncommitted and resentful for not being fully on Level 3 programmes. Likewise, staff had not found the experience to be a positive one with results often disappointing.

Havering Sixth Form College was determined to challenge this stereotype and set about changing the nature of the courses on offer and raising the profile of the Level 2 students within the college. Level 2 students consisted of approximately 130 of the total 2000 and many were on Level 3 programmes but with a Level 2 qualification to be completed such as English or Mathematics.

The college put in place wider choice of courses, committed staff with clearly defined roles for early intervention and close monitoring, genuine paths for progression to Level 3 courses and specific events in place to raise the profile of Level 2.

The key messages to be learned from the whole process are:

- A genuine commitment from all staff to raise the profile and achievement of all Level 2 students
- A determination to raise the self esteem of students on Level 2 programmes
- A focus on early engagement with students who may be possible candidates before they have time to disengage
- The provision of appropriate support to assist every student in achieving their potential

## **Havering Sixth Form College**

### **The Steps taken in ensuring effective provision for Level 2**

#### **Background**

Level 2 success levels at Havering Sixth Form College were relatively low in 2005. The overall Success Rate for Level 2 courses was 77% with dissatisfaction within the student cohort a major factor. Paul Wakeling, the Principal, encouraged a review of the provision and a full revamp of what was available and how it was delivered. It has been a long task with some work still to be done, but staff and students alike are extremely pleased with the developments, so far and the success rates in 2008 were last recorded as 87% thus giving a significant increase. This has been recognised by OFSTED in their 2009 inspection report in which they highlighted the *'high proportion of high grade achievement at GCSE' as a key strength of the college. They went onto comment that the Success rates on level 2 courses are high and the proportion of learners who achieve high grades is some 15 percentage points higher than the national average.*

#### **What Works Well**

- 1 Paul Wakeling, the newly appointed Principal at that time, was proactive in ensuring a strong team of committed staff was in place with a very specific brief for Level 2. Areas to be covered were Key Skills, English Communication Level 2, Mathematics Level 2, Literacy and Academic Business courses and Vocational Courses. At the time when this case study was researched, all the post holders of the above, reflected a strong shared vision and were able to describe in detail how they are fitted into the overall provision for Level 2.
- 2 The level of self esteem of the students has not just miraculously appeared but has been nurtured by a series of very specific events put in place in the yearly calendar. The year begins early with a Summer Project run in the end of June and repeated in early July. It is targeted at 'borderline' students, with those predicted to get Cs and Ds in their GCSEs and involves a week of engaging and team building activities led by a cross section of the staff. Attendance by these students has subsequently been tracked across the year and higher attendance rates have been noted.
- 3 An element of fun and enjoyment is present throughout, in the nature of the events hosted for these students and the Induction Day in September, is a perfect example of this. Taking its theme from a popular television programme, the introduction follows the structure of a Speak Easy Dragon's Den, where all are involved in team presentations for the Dragon's Den ( a team of resident experts)

- 4 Progression onto Level 3 courses or into the world of work is a constant theme and the careers event, hosted in January is highly valued. All Level 2 students take part in an interview day with the opportunity to complete curriculum vitae, train for interviews, experience a formal interview with feedback from prospective employers and begin the process of applying to return to college.
- 5 Celebrations of success are high on the agenda at Havering Sixth Form College and the Awards Evening held in May, is proving increasingly popular. Students and parents are invited along with all the staff. All those attending are presented with a certificate based on the achievements in effort as well as achievement to date. To give it the merit it deserves, formal wear is encouraged and students happily rise to the challenge!
- 6 Level 2 success is not only at the heart of the ethos of the college, but in the design of the buildings and classroom allocation. Classes are timetabled in much coveted rooms and the new, much hoped for build, promises to retain this. The Learning Zone is housed centrally and is a happy buzzing area where students do not seem embarrassed to drop in for targeted help.
- 7 Support for Level 2 is, as is the case across the college, not merely promised but consciously delivered. A team of dedicated staff provide help for students when they need it but there is also a structure in place to follow up on attendance and achievement reviews are carried out every six weeks. In parallel with this, there is constant support for teaching and learning with inset targeted towards Level 2.
- 8 Effective Pastoral care is seen as central, as many have arrived disaffected by their previous experience. Strong tutors are specifically recruited and offer all students 3\* 10 minute slots plus one hour per week. Most of this allocation is given to one to one tutorials. A point is made of ensuring that, where possible, the personal tutor also teaches them, helping to ensure continuity.
- 9 Choice is now a conscious option within Level 2 study and students can opt for Adult Numeracy or Adult Literacy where applicable and not necessarily repeats of English or Mathematics GCSE. Where repeats are offered, the old notion of trailing repeatedly through the course has long been abandoned and a specific targeting programme ensures that only those areas needing to be revisited are covered. The BTEC First Diploma in Business is proving increasingly popular, where VLE plays an important part.

## **Areas for Development**

- 1 Partly a victim of its own success, the Level 2 classes can sometimes be overly large and the college plans to address this.

**This case study can only provide a brief snap shot of the strengths within the college. If you would like further information please contact;**

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