

Derbyshire college wins award

Castle Donington Community college wins Centre of Excellence award

On 20 February 2008, Castle Donington Community College in Derby was presented by EDI with a Centre of Excellence award for its innovative approach to assessment and dedication to pupil development. Recognising and rewarding the college for its continued focus on student progress and development, the award also highlights the improvements in attainment that the school has made over the past few years.

Castle Donington Community College has 500 pupils on roll from the age of 10 to 14, with a catchment area of Castle Donington and the surrounding villages of Hemington, Breedon, Diseworth, Long Whetton and Kegworth. Over the past few years the school has excelled in driving improvements and raising standards, helped by its innovative approach to assessment. Motivating and encouraging students to learn independently is a key focus for the college and the results of the 2007 Key Stage 3 Performance Tables, published by the Department for Children, Schools and Families, highlight the success of this focus. Placed 6th in the UK for the value that it adds to its students' education from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3, the college is excelling in offering its students the right atmosphere in which they can develop – both academically and professionally.

Assessment and modern technology have been two key strands of Castle Donington Community College's push for raising attainment. With pupils leaving the college at the age of 14 to embark upon their GCSE courses at another school, accurate assessment of their ability and level is key to a successful transition. Recognising that technology can play a vital role, both in motivating students to take tests and also in helping to analyse assessment data, Castle Donington Community College uses Goal, an online interactive assessment service, to measure a wide range of pupil knowledge and skill capabilities. Using Goal as part of the assessment process has enabled the school to track every single student's progress, highlighting areas and issues for concern. It also means that results of tests are provided to teachers within 24 hours, giving students quick and targeted feedback – something which the college believes is vital to motivating students.

Fully embracing the idea of motivating students to learn independently, Castle Donington Community College has taken assessment and achievement to a new level over the past year. Committing to extra lessons and study, some year 9 students entered the 2007 Science GCSE exam, a full two years ahead of the usual GCSE age of 16. Every student passed – a remarkable achievement for both the students and the college.

Brian Ward, Vice Principal of Castle Donington Community College commented: "Our school has gone from strength to strength in the past few years and we are thrilled to be nominated as a Centre of Excellence by EDI. We are proud to record a significant improvement in students' progress as they move



through our school and we believe that our use of ICT within assessment has contributed to this success. Using Goal has not only helped motivate our students to sit assessments but has also significantly reduced marking time and workload for our teachers, enabling them to concentrate on teaching rather than administration.”

Nigel Snook, Chief Executive of EDI, commented: “We are delighted to present Castle Donington Community College with our Centre of Excellence Award. We cannot commend the school highly enough for its innovative and creative approach to assessment and we are honoured that it is using Goal services to help achieve such high standards and progress across the curriculum.”



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