

Hull College Group

Monitoring visit report

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Monitoring Visit: Main Findings

Context and focus of visit

In September 2013 the college started to offer full-time provision for 14 to 16-year-olds to enable students to complete a Key Stage 4 equivalent programme as an alternative to school. This monitoring visit examined the progress made to date against the themes identified in this report and focused solely on the new 14 to 16 full-time provision.

At the time of the visit, 86 students were enrolled at Hull and Goole College from two different local authority areas. The college's Chief Executive is a member of the national steering group developing the provision.

Themes

What progress has the college made in implementing clear admissions and exclusion policies for its 14 to 16 provision? Significant

The college has devised clear and comprehensive admissions policies and procedures. These policies and practices are understood well by potential students, parents/carers and staff. The opportunities for potential students and their parents/carers to consider and raise questions about admission and transition arrangements are planned well and plentiful. They include individual meetings, open events, newsletters and tours of the college and its facilities. Current students will be excellent ambassadors for this provision and the benefits of attending the college in Key Stage 4.

Mandatory one-to-one interviews to discuss transition arrangements are organised and offer additional opportunities to discuss students' and the college's expectations, potential barriers to learning and students' aspirations. Dates outlining the transition process are communicated to parents/carers and potential students. The college has an independent appeals panel for those who are not accepted and works closely with the local authorities. Parents and carers have signed appropriate consent and indemnity forms. Communication with parents on admission and expulsion, and on the college's behaviour expectations is good. Strong early links with parents ensure positive parental attitudes to the provision. A developing and constructive partnership has been established with local authorities.

Students receive initial assessments in English, mathematics and information and communication technology, and these are matched against Key Stage 2 assessments to determine their expected levels of progress. Staff use initial assessments to plan for additional learning needs and intervention strategies. However, the college does not always receive from students' previous schools the details of their attainment on entry and this hinders the early monitoring and support arrangements. Dyslexia tests are available and where appropriate students receive support.

A clear behaviour and discipline policy is in place and implemented consistently. Staff have received training on managing challenging behaviour and appropriate strategies to establish positive learning environments. Policies and strategies on behaviour and exclusion are shared and understood by parents/carers and students. A strong anti-bullying and antisocial behaviour policy is embedded well. Inspectors were impressed with the positive students' behaviour that they observed throughout the monitoring visit. The college has provided anger management counselling which has had a positive impact on the behaviour and attitudes of a few students.

What progress has the college made in providing sufficient, appropriately qualified staff to lead and teach the provision and to support the learners? Significant

All teachers have qualified teacher status and relevant subject and vocational experience. Teachers on the core curriculum have either secondary school experience or have previously worked with students aged 14 to 16 in the college. Vocational tutors have industrial and work-related experience and this has helped many students to focus their further aspirations for additional and higher qualifications and to develop career ambitions.

The senior leadership team and governors are strongly committed to the development and success of the 14 to 16 college. The 14 to 16 team members work well together. The college has used its previous experience in working with students aged 14 to 16 effectively to devise appropriate courses and environments that enhance the possibilities for them to gain confidence, develop and prosper. Even at this early stage in the provision, its success in improved students' attitude and attendance is considerable.

Staff have received training on how best to deal with challenging behaviour and a variety of potential students' health, work and social needs. The college has promoted effective strategies to develop teachers' skills in coaching techniques and positive learning approaches. The college has appropriate opportunities for the sharing of best practice. Skilled support staff enhance the learning of students through group and one-to-one intervention activities. Teaching assistants are effective in supporting students' in-class activities. Training is in place to support pupil premium awareness.

What progress has the college made in ensuring that the curriculum is sufficiently broad and covers all statutory subjects? Significant

Students can choose from several vocational pathways with additional vocational subjects available to enrich students' experience and learning further. On the Hull City Centre campus five key vocational pathways are offered in sport, creative arts,

construction, engineering, and health and social care. On the Goole campus vocational pathways are offered in health and social care, engineering and business. A second tier of vocational options are matched to students' interest and include hair and beauty, travel and tourism, and GCSE art and design. All students take the core curriculum in English, mathematics, science, motor vehicle, sport, hospitality, modern foreign languages and information and communication technology. In addition, students have two hours of physical education weekly. Religious education and value systems are included within the personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) studies, which include such topics as personal and local identity, God and morals, and exploration of religious attitudes on freedom and duty. Staff promote healthy lifestyles with nice displays of students' work covering these topics. In PSHE lessons, students are presently organising their work-experience options for the summer term. Equality and diversity are embedded across the curriculum; in several lessons, students discussed sensitive issues maturely and responsibly.

Tutorial and enrichment provision offers students the opportunities to develop entrepreneurial skills. Staff organise trips to develop self-esteem and broaden students' understanding of the diversity of British society. Other enrichment activities include sport, reading intervention sessions, and English project classes. After-school activities include sports, performing arts, homework clubs, and vocational sessions such as the 'Jobs Club' and English, mathematics and science intervention groups.

Effective and well planned SENCO support is provided to develop lower-ability groups' emotional intelligence and reading skills. Good tracking and intervention ensure that students make progress. The SENCO drop-in sessions for all teaching and support staff have promoted appropriate strategies successfully to raise attainment.

Attendance monitoring is effective. Many students have made good progress in improving their attendance record from a low base at Key Stage 3. The college has effective strategies in place to tackle those whose attendance remains a concern. Students are rewarded for good attendance.

What progress has the college made in quality assuring and evaluating all aspects of the provision for continuous improvement? Significant

Clear and effective quality assurance procedures are in place for the 14 to 16 college. Course and progress reviews are regular and comprehensive. Where areas for improvement are identified, the college takes speedy action. The monitoring of students' progress, including across distinctive groups, is detailed and thorough. Staff monitor the progress of students eligible for the pupil premium very carefully.

The operational day-to-day management is effective. An internal lesson observation system is in place and training issues arising from observations inform staff

development. Managers do learning walks regularly to check on provision and students' attitudes to learning. Set against their starting points the significant majority of students are making progress in the core subjects. Progress on the vocational pathways is good. Staff are highly committed to the 14 to 16 provision and ensuring that students make good progress and have strong aspirational goals. Sometimes these goals are unrealistic and staff need to balance this against the need to building students' self-esteem and confidence.

Students understand the progress that they have made, their current targets and their expected progress. Many take pride in the progress they have made since enrolling on the college's provision. While reviews and progress reports are regular these are not communicated to parents on a sufficiently consistent basis and an additional opportunity to involve parents is missed.

What progress has the college made in providing learners with sufficient student care, guidance and support, including the implementation of a behaviour policy appropriate for learners aged 14 to 16? Significant

Many students have had a disruptive history in secondary school for a variety of reasons, including behaviour issues, bullying and low attendance. The college has well-developed and effective support mechanisms to tackle students' needs and to develop their sense of responsibility and engagement in learning. Staff are committed, know their students well and give of their time to ensure that they have opportunities to make the best progress they can. Parents are supportive of the provision. The college has established effective links with parents to report both concerns and positive students' attitudes to learning. A rewards system acknowledges good achievement, positive attitude and improved performance.

Students are supported well by teachers and teaching assistants in class. In the vast majority of classes observed, behaviour was good and students applied themselves to their work diligently or cooperated effectively with other students in learning activities. In a few lessons there was low-level disruption because teachers' expectations were low and students were challenged insufficiently. Careers guidance is a strength. Many students are developing aspirations for further and higher qualifications and see a growing purpose in pursuing education and vocationally related skills development.

All students at the 14 to 16 college have a mentor with whom they meet fortnightly. Staff from across the college, including the Chief Executive, senior leaders, middle managers, teachers and support staff, volunteer to be mentors and are trained in working with the young people. Students value this extra support and it raises the awareness of this group of students throughout the college.

Has the college made sufficient arrangements to ensure that all learners are safeguarded and that the college meets its statutory duty for safeguarding? **Yes**

The college complies with its statutory duties in relation to safeguarding and child-protection legislation. Appropriate re-enforcement and risk assessments are in place for health and safety throughout the locations that students use. Risk assessments in vocational workshops are thorough. The college has appropriate arrangements for safer recruitment. The 14 to 16 college uses a local authority trips and visits system to enhance safety practices further and support risk assessment.

Students say they feel safe and confident around the college site. On both sites students have a dedicated and secure base where they are taught the core subjects, and meet for breakfast, registration, tutorials and PSHE. A swipe card/key pad system operates in the 14 to 16 college base rooms. They have dedicated common rooms which they value and keep tidy. Both campuses have a quiet room facility where students can reflect or withdraw to, to seek composure. The college places a strong focus on the development of a respect and responsibilities culture. Strong support systems, often linked to external agencies and services, are available when appropriate and needed.

Students' awareness and understanding of personal safety, including the safe use of the internet, are promoted well in tutorials. The college promotes a zero tolerance policy on bullying and harassment. Students confirmed that they are confident in approaching tutors on issues which concern them. If incidences of bullying occur they are dealt with promptly and effectively.

Students participate increasingly well in college life. They value being at the college and see it as having been a positive and increasingly successful choice for them. Students also engage in student focus groups and student voice activities and in this way have an impact on life in the 14 to 16 college.

Strengths and areas of weaknesses in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Students work well independently. In an English lesson, students were challenged to construct an essay on the banquet scene from Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. They were well organised and demonstrated a good understanding of the narrative of the play in a generally well-paced initial question and answer session. They then worked independently on constructing the introductory paragraph for the essay. Students were highly focused on the task and many produced well-considered ideas and well-constructed written work.

In some lessons, the more able are not sufficiently challenged. Additional and extension activities and exercises tended to focus on the quantity rather than the

quality of the work given. Staff do not always encourage students to give extended answers to questions and develop their spoken skills.

Students are developing their vocational skills and connecting these with real work and community situations. In one construction class students worked diligently and with developing skill on making a wooden tool box. In the 'Job Club' later in the day they continued their project on making an eight-foot-tall Dr Who 'Tardis' as the entrance to a primary school library. The project works to industry standard specifications to make an attractive library entrance to encourage reluctant readers to visit, use and enjoy the school library. Students were able to describe the making and purpose of the Tardis project and are proud of their work. They were clear about how it will benefit them in demonstrating their skills to potential employers when applying for an apprenticeship.

The setting of homework and quality of teachers' marking are inconsistent. In too many exercise books and assignments, marking did not give pointers to the next steps to improvement. Inspectors saw little evidence of teachers' follow-up to assess improvement. Too much students' work is incomplete, particularly in gapped handouts, and students are not expected to correct mistakes routinely. In preparing for their June examinations in science, students attend regularly, and value, the one-to-one support sessions run by A-level students.

In classes where teaching is weaker, students are content to sit back and receive rather than be eager to seek and contribute. In these lessons, low-level disruptive behaviour limits learning and students' progress is restricted. Where teaching is good students are more engaged in activities and respond enthusiastically. The college recognises that it is not always using technology sufficiently to support learning.

Teachers and support staff use lots of praise and encouragement that learners respond to well, and appreciate. However, staff need to be careful not to praise mediocrity and ensure that learners are achieving their full academic potential.

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