

# Prior Pursglove College

## Re-inspection monitoring visit report

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**Unique reference number:** 130575

**Name of lead inspector:** Josephine Nowacki HMI

**Last day of inspection:** 24 September 2014

**Type of provider:** Sixth form college

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## **Monitoring Visit: Main Findings**

### **Context and focus of visit**

This is the third follow up re-inspection monitoring visit to Prior Pursglove College following publication of the inspection report in January 2014 which found the provider to be inadequate overall.

### **Themes**

#### **How much progress has the college made in ensuring that student outcomes improve?**

College data for the latest examination results in 2014 show a very marked improvement in student outcomes in most areas. Success rates for AS students, identified as a key weakness in the last inspection, increased by 17 percentage points and are now above the 2013 average for sixth form colleges. At A level, success rates increased by almost three percentage points and are around the 2013 average for sixth form colleges. Success rates for students aged 16-18 on level 1 and level 2 courses have also increased and are well above the previous year's average. The number of students completing their apprenticeships within the planned time has increased by 8 percentage points and is above the national average.

The proportion of students achieving high grades in their qualifications has increased and significantly so for AS students which was a major weakness identified in the last inspection. College data for 2014 examinations shows that AS high grades have increased by 15 percentage points to almost one percent above the 2013 average for sixth form colleges. At A level, the proportion of high grades increased by 6.4 percentage points. Although this overall figure remains below the sixth form college average, further analysis of data shows that the majority of the most able students do achieve the high grades they should.

Value-added data (Alps) indicate that most students make at least average progress with many more than in the previous year making good or better progress.

While the overall picture is one of significant improvement, there remain pockets of underperformance, especially in fine art, photography and science subjects. Managers are working hard to eliminate these through rigorous tracking and monitoring of student performance and providing intensive support for students identified as making insufficient progress. Managers are focusing very closely on the teacher performance in the weaker areas as part of their ongoing strategy of continuous improvement.

#### **Significant improvement for students**

**How much progress has the college made in improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment to help ensure that all students achieve as well as they can?**

The college has worked hard to improve the quality of teaching learning and assessment and to remedy the weaknesses identified in the last inspection report. This work is beginning to reap rewards. The majority of teachers are very focused on what it is they need to do to improve their practice, both in and out of the classroom. Many strengths were identified in the sample of lessons observed during the monitoring visit. For example, teachers are adept at eliciting answers from all students, encouraging them to develop their thinking and powers of reasoning. At other times, teachers work hard to develop students' oracy skills through high quality group work that enables students to discuss and challenge each other confidently. Teachers place much emphasis on developing subject appropriate skills and terminology. For example, in an English lesson students annotated a Christina Rossetti poem and accurately identified linguistic features and references. However, managers and teachers are aware that, although much has been achieved in improving the quality of teaching and learning, more needs to be done to increase still further the proportion of good and outstanding teaching and learning and to eradicate the remaining weaknesses in a few subjects. In this they are determined.

**Reasonable improvement for students****How well is the college rectifying weaknesses in the self-assessment report to ensure that strengths and areas for improvement are identified accurately?**

Since the previous inspection, the vice principal responsible for self-assessment and quality assurance has left the college. The now smaller senior management team have revised the quality assurance arrangements and are working relentlessly to ensure that the current self-assessment process is thorough and focused on driving improvement at all levels in the college. Central to this is greater accountability for individual classroom teachers and rigorous monitoring by middle and senior managers. Accurate data is widely accessible, scrutinised far more robustly than before and used judiciously to inform both strengths and weaknesses. There is more work to be done, but current managers are determined to ensure that the process is inclusive and that all staff are aware of what the college needs to do to improve outcomes for students yet further.

**Reasonable improvement for students**

**How much progress has the governing body made in scrutinising the college's performance and making sure that judgements are not over generous?**

The governing body has worked tirelessly to remedy the weaknesses identified at the last inspection. They have challenged both themselves and college managers to improve outcomes for students. The availability of reliable data and accurate reporting by senior managers are enabling them to challenge judgements and assess the college's performance for themselves. Governors are increasingly confident in asking questions for clarification and checking areas that they are unsure about. They understand completely their strategic role and responsibilities for the college's performance, but equally understand the current need to probe operational matters more carefully where these seem at odds with their aspiration for the college to return to its former good status. For example, during the monitoring visit the governors attended training on how they might gain greater insight into the quality of teaching, learning and assessment at the college, but without compromising their key strategic role. Their questions were insightful and their challenges to senior leaders to produce even more useful reports revealed a sound knowledge and understanding of their responsibility to the college and what they required to fulfil this role effectively.

**Significant improvement for students**

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