

Prior Pursglove College

Re-inspection monitoring visit report

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Last day of inspection: 5 November 2014

Type of provider: Sixth form college

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Monitoring Visit: Main Findings

Context and focus of visit

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

Themes

How much progress has the college made in improving students' outcomes, including attendance and punctuality?

The college's monitoring system, known as Key Assessment Grades (KAG), is now well established and effective at identifying students who are falling behind or at risk of underachieving. The process takes place seven times each year including two trial exams. The most recent KAG1 is intended to highlight gaps in students' knowledge at an early stage so that support can be put in place swiftly. The outcome of KAG1 shows that the college has continued to build on the successful examination results in the summer of 2014. The current estimated success rates are in line with college targets. Students on level 3 vocational programmes are making good progress towards their targets, as are students on level 1 and level 2 courses.

Compared with a similar period in 2013, students' attendance has improved markedly and is high except for a few classes in A-level English language, English language and literature, history, politics, philosophy and ethics, and for a small number of adults. Managers are monitoring these areas closely to ensure the same high levels of attendance seen elsewhere in the college. Students' punctuality is very good.

Significant improvement for students

How much progress has the college made in improving the quality of teaching and learning and in particular the way teachers support students in developing English and mathematics?

The quality of teaching and learning continues to improve. Where learning is good or better, there is a higher level of challenge and students respond with enthusiasm and application. They demonstrate refined independent learning skills and work collaboratively in pairs and groups. Students relish activities that enhance their problem solving and deeper thinking skills. In weaker lessons, students are not challenged sufficiently to develop their learning and understanding further. In these lessons activities are not always designed appropriately to ensure that all students benefit fully. Staff do not always use data effectively to match activities to students'

needs; in particular, the most able students are not always challenged sufficiently to think more deeply.

Staff provide a much improved focus on developing students' English skills in most subjects. Good development of subject-specific vocabulary was evident in many lessons. However, mathematical skills are promoted less well.

Overall, teaching and learning are improving and much is good or better, but there remain pockets of weaker performance. Managers are very aware of where these occur and provide appropriate and robust support to help individual teachers improve their practice.

Reasonable improvement for students

How much progress is the college making in ensuring that self-assessment is rigorous, especially at course level and that strengths and areas for improvement are identified accurately?

Managers have introduced much greater rigour into the self-assessment process, especially at course and subject level. This includes better involvement of staff, the use of more robust data from a range of sources to inform key strengths and areas for improvement, and a more robust moderation of judgements. Staff take a more rigorous approach to assessing key strengths and areas for improvement and there is a general determination to shine a light on every area of the college in order to improve.

The draft self-assessment report is an honest reflection of the college's position, and this is a vast improvement on the previous report that was overgenerous in its grading of the college's performance. However, the report still requires refinement and altogether more succinctness so that judgements and the evidence underpinning these are explicit; the college is working on this.

Reasonable improvement for students

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