

# Greenwich Community College

## First re-inspection monitoring visit report

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**Name of lead inspector:** Richard Beaumont HMI

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**Type of provider:** General further education college

  

**Address:** 95 Plumstead Road  
Plumstead  
London  
SE18 7DQ

**Telephone number:** 020 8488 4800

# **Monitoring Visit: Main Findings**

## **Context and focus of visit**

This is the first re-inspection monitoring visit to Greenwich Community College following publication of the inspection report, on 17 December 2014, which found the college to be inadequate overall.

## **Themes**

### **The Principal and governing body must fully recognise, and take decisive action to improve quickly, years of college under-performance.**

At the time of the last inspection, governors, senior managers and staff had an unrealistic view of the college's performance. Actions to improve had been particularly slow and were not strong enough to tackle the full impact of poor performance over time. Governors were not sufficiently well informed about the college and failed to challenge managers robustly to make significant improvements. The decline in enrolments, because of poor quality provision, led to a reduction in the course offer, which was contrary to the needs of the local businesses and students.

Since the inspection, an interim Principal has been appointed and all of the previous senior management team have left the college. Three governors, including the chairman, have resigned.

Governors do not have accurate and/or sufficient data and performance information to maintain a good understanding of students' progress and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.

## **Priorities for improvement**

- Managers and governors must establish a strategically effective, knowledgeable and robust governing body and senior management team, leading to significant, immediate and sustained improvements.
- Governors must have absolute clarity about the short- and medium-term aims that they, the Principal, and staff are striving to achieve. They must ensure they fully set, and understand, detailed and challenging targets, and that these are frequently monitored and critically assessed.
- Governors must be relentless in their pursuit of improvement and ensure that the Principal and senior management team are held fully to account for organisational performance.
- Governors and the Principal must immediately and fully review the quality of provision as a whole, by department, programme area, and course. They must also review the performance of teachers and support staff, and the progress of all students. Actions must be set within a rigorous improvement plan which is swiftly implemented.

- Governors must ensure that by the next Ofsted inspection the college is judged to be at least requiring improvement with significant good features.
- Governors and the Principal must develop a clear strategy that tackles falling enrolments and create a college that fully represents the needs of the local business community and students.

### **Improvement to the number of students who are retained and achieve their qualifications and programmes of study.**

Overall, success rates are well below national rates. A slight improvement occurred in 2013/14, although this was lower than the corresponding increases in the sector as a whole. While success rates are low for most groups, students aged 16 to 18, and Black African and Caribbean heritage male students are least likely to achieve. Too many students fail to gain their qualifications even though they stay to the end of their courses.

Students' attendance rates are low and have a negative impact on learning.

Too few students progress to higher/other levels of study.

Apprenticeship provision is too small to meet local and national needs, and completion rates are exceptionally low.

### **Priorities for improvement**

Managers and staff must:

- drive up attendance rates through a relentless and coordinated approach, so that all students fully understand that poor attendance is unacceptable
- significantly improve success rates for all student groups, and reduce disparities in success rates between different groups
- ensure that students at risk of withdrawal are fully supported to continue; where students do withdraw, ensure that teachers and line managers are held to account
- assiduously monitor students' progress throughout each course so that all students stay to the end of their programme, make good progress, and succeed in gaining their intended qualifications
- significantly increase the success rates of apprentices and reduce the time they spend in completing their programmes
- encourage more students to increase their life chances by progressing to higher/other levels of study.

### **Improvement in all aspects of teaching, learning and assessment.**

The standards of teaching, learning and assessment are inadequate. Not enough teaching is good or better and too much is inadequate. Too many teachers have low

expectations of students and teach to the minimum qualification requirements. Too many students make slow progress.

Planning of lessons is mainly generic and many teachers fail to recognise or meet the differing needs of their students. Too few students are encouraged to develop independent learning skills and not enough learning takes place outside the classroom. A minority of teachers finish lessons early without good reason.

College grades awarded following internal lesson observations do not sufficiently reflect the level of students' achievements and are often over generous. Managers do not use a broad enough range of measures to monitor teachers' performance.

Too few students on study programmes benefit from experiencing work-related activities linked to their career or vocational aspirations.

### **Priorities for improvement**

- Managers at all levels need to establish rigorous performance measures that fully recognise the wide range of factors that have an impact on students' progress and on the standards of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Students on study programmes should benefit from well planned, good quality work-experience opportunities, linked closely to their future career objectives.
- Students must experience lessons that inspire them to reach their full potential. The planning of activities must reflect all students' progress and capabilities.
- Staff and managers should thoroughly monitor students' progress throughout courses to ensure that students stay to the end of their programmes, make good progress and succeed in gaining all their intended qualifications.
- Managers should require and enable staff to share best practice widely to support improvements.
- Governors should prioritise the improvement of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. They must have a clear understanding of current practice and be fully informed as to standards and improvements. Where progress is not quick enough, senior managers must be held accountable and be required to re-double their efforts.

### **Improvement in the planning of teaching, learning and assessment, and success rates for, English and mathematics courses.**

The planning of provision in English and in mathematics is poor. At the time of the inspection, changes were being introduced to improve performance in these subjects, but these had not had time to show any impact. The link between students' work in discrete English and mathematics lessons and their vocational studies was not good enough and too many students failed to recognise the importance of these subjects to their career prospects and life chances.

Functional skills completion rates are unacceptably low, and are significantly below national rates. The proportion of students gaining GCSE grades at A\* to C in these subjects is low.

Too few students make good progress either in discrete lessons or through reinforcement by vocational teachers. In most lessons, students lack opportunities to practise skills they have learnt.

Students' poor attendance means that the requirements of study programmes are not being fully met.

### **Priorities for improvement**

- Teachers of English and mathematics must improve the quality of teaching considerably. Staff and managers must be held to account for standards and performance.
- Teachers' planning and timetabling of lessons must ensure that English and mathematics lessons are at the core of students' learning experiences.
- All teachers, including vocational teachers, additional learning support tutors and classroom assistants, need to work effectively together. They must ensure that individual students receive a seamless service taking full account of their initial assessment and formative assessment results. They must share information about students' progress and performance and all contribute effectively to individual students' work programmes.
- Vocational teachers must integrate the development of English and mathematical skills fully into vocational studies and in discrete lessons for these subjects, teachers must ensure vocational relevance.
- Governors must prioritise the improvement of standards of teaching and learning in English and mathematics. They must be fully informed of students' progress and ensure that, where progress is not good, senior managers are held accountable.

### **Improvement in weak management, poor accountability and ineffective use of data and performance management information over time.**

Successive management teams have failed to deal with long-standing and ingrained impediments to raising the standards of education at the college. During the inspection, there were early indications of improvement in some areas, but not all. The standard of students' performance is generally low, with too many variations across the college.

A small minority of staff do not adhere to basic, expected procedures in their job specifications, and this inhibits the creation of a high-achieving culture throughout the college.

Data are not used well enough at any level of the college to evaluate performance critically, nor to set ambitious targets in quality improvement plans. The indicators of

success in the strategic plan are in some instances unrealistic, and in others imprecise.

### **Priorities for improvement**

- Managers at all levels need to be relentless in their monitoring and improvement of all aspects of students' progress. They must become adept at critically evaluating accurate data and up-to-date performance management information.
- Managers must use a wide range of performance measures to accurately reflect students' progress, and to set high standards.
- All staff should be fully aware and supportive of the challenging targets set. Each member of staff, regardless of role, should be accountable for the impact they have on students' performance.
- Staff, including middle managers, must monitor students' progress closely, and frequently report updates and forecasts on a range of key student indicators to senior managers and governors.

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