

## Grimsby Institute of Further and Higher Education

### Monitoring visit report

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

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## Monitoring visit: main findings

### Context and focus of visit

This is a monitoring visit to monitor the progress of new full-time provision for 14 to 16-year-olds in the college in the first year of its provision.

This college has had full-time provision in place for 14 to 16-year-olds since September 2014. It has 34 students in this age group. The provision is called 'The Academy Grimsby' and it is located in a separate building from the main college site. Students are recruited from across North East Lincolnshire. There are plans to expand the provision in future and to offer a wider range of vocational options in addition to the two available at present, which are health and social care, and engineering.

### Themes

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

The Academy Grimsby (the academy) has an admissions policy that is in line with Department for Education guidance and school admissions policies. For example, it appropriately prioritises places for looked after children. Plans are in place to accommodate increasing numbers of students in future years and in the unlikely event of oversubscription, students not in the stated priority categories will be selected at random. The academy does not select on ability. An appeals procedure is in place.

The home/academy agreement is a clear document that outlines what students and their parents can expect from the college and the respective responsibilities of all parties. It is signed by parents, students and college staff.

The exclusions policy is clear and explains the stages involved in arriving at the decision to exclude. Although not explicit about arrangements with the local authority in the case of permanent exclusion, it is clear from discussions with college managers that in the very small number of cases where this has occurred, effective liaison ensured that students continued their education elsewhere. Parents have the right to appeal against permanent exclusion.

The college has marketed the academy in a variety of ways. However, very few of the current students received information about the academy directly from their high schools. Student data from high schools, on prior attainment, progress, attendance and behaviour, were not provided in many cases. College staff are working with

schools and the local authority to establish more productive working relationships to enable a better exchange of data for future students.

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

Staffing problems in the early months of the academy's existence have largely been resolved. Following the unforeseen early departure of the first headteacher, who was on secondment from a local school, a recently retired headteacher was appointed temporarily. A permanent headteacher with a secondary school background has since been appointed and is now in post.

The college has recruited most teachers specifically to teach students aged 14 to 16. Many are experienced at Key Stage 4. All staff are appropriately qualified. Vocational staff delivering the programmes in engineering and health and social care have relevant skills and are experienced in their specialist areas. They make good use of their knowledge in lessons to bring realism and relevance to their subjects. Opportunities for teachers to learn and share expertise with similar specialists on the main college site require further development, especially in engineering.

Staff have been provided with suitable continuing professional development to improve aspects of their teaching and to support students to achieve. Where staff underperformance has been identified it has been well managed and staff have been supported to develop. Managers identify strengths in teaching through the monitoring processes but they do not do enough to ensure that this good practice is shared so that all teachers benefit. A suitably qualified progression coach provides individual support to students, especially those with greater needs.

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

The curriculum is suitably broad including vocational studies, English, mathematics science, religious education, British values, history, information and communication technology, French and personal, social and health education. Regular assemblies promote a learning culture that emphasises good attendance and behaviour and helps to prepare students for the next stage of their education. Religious education lessons enable students to explore and learn about different perspectives and views on ethical issues. The history syllabus includes the history of medicine that complements the health and social care course. One group of students studies French, ensuring that a full complement of English Baccalaureate subjects is offered. A fifth of the timetable is devoted to vocational studies in health and social care or

engineering. Students attend physical education lessons on the college's main site where they have the use of a wide range of sporting facilities. An enrichment programme, offered through the main college, provides several options and students enjoy the opportunity to have taster sessions in other vocational areas. In the current Year 10, all the girls are studying health and social care and all the boys are studying engineering. The college is actively seeking to challenge gender stereotyping and to encourage students to consider non-traditional choices.

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

College managers are strongly committed to providing a high-quality educational experience for local 14 to 16-year-olds who wish to focus on a vocational route. Quality assurance arrangements are thorough and comprehensive, with an emphasis on continuous improvement. College managers monitor the quality of provision carefully through lesson observations and learning walks, book scrutinies, individual assessment and progress data, and feedback from students. Where weaknesses are identified managers take swift action to improve provision. This has included the appointment of new staff where it was deemed necessary. Outcomes of quality assurance activities feed into a teaching review programme that monitors the performance of individual teachers. Performance objectives set for teachers focus on achieving challenging student outcomes and are managed through the college performance management system.

**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? Reasonable**

The college has a well-designed range of policies covering aspects of academy life. These are planned to help prepare students for their adult working lives. Examples include a healthy eating policy and a uniform and appearance policy. During the inspection all students adhered to the uniform policy, giving them a sense of identity and a pride in belonging to the academy. Pastoral care is strong. Students particularly value the individual attention they receive and this makes a significant contribution to their personal development and growing confidence and self-esteem. The support provided in lessons is an area for development and inspectors observed lessons where support workers were not utilised effectively or where there was insufficient individual support.

Individual careers advice sessions help students plan their future careers effectively. The behaviour policy is specifically designed for 14 to 16-year-olds at the academy. It makes the college's expectations clear, detailing 10 acceptable standards. It is

designed to foster good behaviour through appropriate rewards and sanctions. Students regard it as fair and report that teachers and other staff manage behaviour well. Rewards are used effectively as positive reinforcement for good attendance and behaviour, and for individuals showing significant improvements. Associated policies include an anti-bullying policy and an attendance policy. Students known to need more support with behaviour are monitored carefully and the progression coach works effectively with individuals. Regular telephone contact with parents helps ensure that staff are aware of issues arising out of college that may impact on student behaviour and steps are then taken to help students settle to learning. Attitudes to learning observed by inspectors were good.

**What progress has the provider made in providing good quality teaching, learning and assessment? Reasonable**

Students enjoy their lessons and most are making good progress. Aspirational and challenging targets are prominently recorded in books and agreed with students. Teachers make good use of information and learning technology to enhance learning. For example, the use of short video extracts followed by interactive discussions between students helped a group of care students to understand the relationships between healthy eating and well-being.

The majority of students are engaged and motivated in lessons. They understand the importance of their studies and the contribution that learning and achievement make to their future career aspirations. The academy provides a welcoming safe environment allowing all students to thrive. However, written feedback on students' marked work focuses too much on what the students have done well and not enough on how they could improve their work to achieve higher grades.

Occasionally a slow pace in lessons leads to steady rather than more rapid progress. Checking of understanding through questioning is not always thorough enough. English and mathematics are developed effectively in separate subject lessons and in vocational lessons. For example, in health and social care students consider the energy expended in different activities. Communication skills are developed through team discussions. In engineering students learn the names of different tools and components. Engineering drawings done to scale require accurate measurements.

**Has the college implemented appropriate measures to ensure that all learners are reasonably safeguarded and that it meets its statutory duty for safeguarding in relation to learners in this age group?**

**Yes**

Appropriate checks on staff are carried out and statutory requirements are met. Staff have had relevant safeguarding training. The academy is located in a separate building from the main college site, which has enabled staff to establish an environment, ethos and culture appropriate to the needs of the 14 to 16-year-old age group. The academy has specific policies in place for full-time 14 to 16-year-olds. Where students access the main college site, for example for sport and enrichment activities, they are transported by minibus and academy staff accompany them.

British values lessons teach students about democracy and the recent focus on the general election has helped students to understand this in context. College staff have recently undertaken training to enable them to take appropriate steps to combat extremism and radicalisation but as yet this has not been incorporated into the academy's personal, social and health education curriculum. Students feel safe and are taught about managing their own personal safety, including e-safety. Bullying is tackled effectively. Students know who to report any concerns to and have confidence in the staff to deal with them.

### **Strengths and areas of weakness in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

Teachers have successfully established very good working relationships with their students that foster positive attitudes to learning and high expectations. Teachers set high standards for presentation and so encourage students to take a pride in their work. In lessons, teachers carefully explain the topics they are covering and plan activities skilfully to engage interest. Students work well in groups and collaborate effectively. Constructive discussions help develop communication skills and teamwork. Teachers make good use of information and learning technology to enhance learning. Vocational subject teachers use examples from their industrial experience to contextualise learning and help students to understand the significance of their studies for their future careers. There is good emphasis on, and development of, English and mathematical skills. Resources for learning, including specialist facilities, are good.

In a few lessons the pace is too slow and students do not make rapid enough progress. On occasion teachers do not coordinate the work of support staff effectively so their presence does not contribute enough to learning. At times in the engineering workshop there is insufficient individual support to ensure that all students can carry out set tasks competently and confidently. Teachers' questioning techniques require improvement to ensure that all students participate fully and understanding is checked thoroughly. Feedback on written work is not consistently constructive in guiding students about how to improve, although good use is made of praise for aspects done well.



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