

# Weymouth College

## Follow up re-inspection monitoring visit report

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**Unique reference number:** 130653

**Name of lead inspector:** Peter Nelson HMI

**Last day of inspection:** 17 June 2015

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

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# Monitoring Visit: Main Findings

## Context and focus of visit

This is the second re-inspection monitoring visit to Weymouth College following publication of the most recent full inspection report on 18 February 2015. At the inspection in January 2015, inspectors judged outcomes for learners and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment as good; they judged effectiveness of leadership and management and the overall effectiveness of the college as inadequate. Inspectors graded five curriculum areas: health and social care; early years and playwork; hospitality and catering; performing arts; and, foundation English. Inspectors judged all these areas as good.

The first re-inspection monitoring visit took place in March 2015. Following this visit, a published report clearly identified strategies that would help contribute to improvements.

For this second re-inspection monitoring visit, the main focus was on aspects of leadership, management and governance. The inspector held meetings with the Principal and nominee, a group of governors, members of the senior leadership team, the clerk to the corporation and a selection of staff; he also reviewed key quality improvement action plans, minutes of meetings and other sources of evidence created since the inspection.

## Themes

<b>How much progress have managers made with actions that address the areas for improvement identified in the recent inspection report, and how well are managers and governors monitoring progress against the recovery plan?</b>	<b>Significant improvement for learners</b>
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Since the last monitoring visit, leaders, managers and governors have made very good progress, particularly to address areas for improvement around leadership, governance and financial management. They have put in place a suitably detailed quality improvement action plan and financial recovery plan. These plans are thorough, detailed, and soundly based on accurate data and conservative forecasts. Representatives from the Further Education Commissioner's office and funding agencies have reviewed these plans and expressed a high level of confidence in the direction of travel of the college.

Leaders, managers and governors have access to detailed, timely and accurate management and financial information which they use frequently to track and monitor progress on the college's path to recovery. They also have suitable processes in place to review and evaluate the impact and effectiveness of quality improvement initiatives. Managers play an active part in recovery and quality improvement. All staff are very positive about the direction of travel. Morale is high,

and staff demonstrate a corporate determination to continue raising standards and improving the quality of provision across the college.

Leaders and managers should maintain the focus and level of scrutiny on quality improvements and financial recovery. They should ensure that any ongoing changes to staffing do not have an adverse impact on the rate of recovery or on staff morale.

**How much progress have governors made to ensure they have the necessary financial expertise and suitable checks and balances in place to maintain a close overview of the college's financial status?** **Significant improvement for learners**

The governing body and clerk have completed a thorough review of the skills of board members. Where they identified gaps, they have recruited several new members with suitable high-level expertise in a range of areas including finance, business and audit. Governors have also amended the chairmanship and membership of key committees to ensure a suitable use of skills and expertise. The board is now much better placed to help maintain a thorough and detailed overview of college financial procedures, expenditure and financial planning. Governors have maintained the services of a highly experienced interim senior manager who leads on financial issues. Governors now provide a far greater level of support and challenge to the senior leadership team in managing the finances of the college. The board and clerk have drawn up a pragmatic succession plan for senior post holders.

**What actions have senior leaders and governors adopted towards strategic and business planning to create a financially viable curriculum that provides for local student and commercial needs?** **Significant improvement for learners**

All staff, learners, managers and governors have been involved in a full review of the curriculum. In reviewing and redesigning the curriculum, leaders have undertaken a full analysis of course costing and staff utilisation, as well as considering the needs and strategic priorities of the local area. Leaders have shared the detailed proposals with governors and aligned the proposals with the financial recovery plan of the college. Managers have developed valuable opportunities to create interest from pupils from local schools, about career and progression opportunities at the college. Managers have also undertaken an innovative exercise to map progression routes for learners between courses and levels of study within the college; they make use of this to raise learners' awareness and appreciation of the different routes to further and higher education and to employment.

**How much progress have managers made to address weak performance in those areas of the curriculum where outcomes for students were low in the last academic year?** **Reasonable improvement for learners**

Managers and staff have worked hard to identify a range of improvement strategies to help raise success rates in weaker areas identified across the college. Data

indicate that managers have maintained good retention of learners in the current academic year. As a result, managers forecast maintaining or slightly improving success rates in 2014/15. Final year-end data will provide a clearer picture of the level of progress made to tackle this area for improvement.

Over the forthcoming months, leaders and managers should continue to focus on those areas where they recognise they have made less progress to date, including in improving learners' functional skills English and mathematics.

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