

Totton College

First re-inspection monitoring visit report

Unique reference number: 130699

Name of lead inspector: Richard Moore HMI

Last day of inspection: 7 July 2015

Type of provider: Sixth form college

Address: Calmore Road
Totton
Southampton
SO40 3ZX

Telephone number: 023 8087 4874

Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

This is the first re-inspection monitoring visit to Totton College following publication of the inspection report on 15 June 2015 which found the college to be inadequate overall. Totton College is a medium-sized sixth form college which has been involved in merger talks with a number of different partner providers during the course of the 2014/15 academic year. At the time of this visit, senior leaders were involved in discussions with Nacro, which is planning to take over the college from November 2015. Nacro is a national charity working across communities in England and Wales to deliver services that equip people with the skills, advice and support they need to move forward in their lives and to get back into education, training or employment. Just prior to the inspection, senior managers at the college took the decision to cease A-level provision for both new and current students in order to focus solely on vocational education. The report sets out the findings from the visit and confirms the priorities agreed with the college to support improvement.

Themes

What actions have been taken to strengthen leadership and management at the college?

The college is currently under the leadership of an interim Principal following the departure of the previous Principal to lead another college earlier in the 2014/15 academic year and prior to the inspection. A restructure of the senior leadership team is currently taking place for September 2015 to reflect the loss of A-level courses and the likelihood of a significant drop in students' enrolments for 2015/16. Senior leaders are forecasting approximately half as many enrolments in September 2015 as in 2014/15.

The vision of senior leaders at Totton is to create a vocational college and to retain, and indeed increase, the amount of work-based training offered. Their intention is to implement the current curriculum plan for 2015/16, although with possible modifications as discussions with Nacro evolve, such as a January entry point for new enrolments.

College managers held their first meeting with senior staff from Nacro and representatives from other stakeholders just prior to this re-inspection monitoring visit. The aim of senior leaders at Nacro is also to retain Totton as a vocational college serving the local community, and to keep its current name. The intention is to offer all the vocational courses in the college's prospectus for 2015/16 for the full duration of next year. Managers at Nacro are keen to stress that the takeover does not entail bringing offenders or ex-offenders from prison or other connected services to the college or its local area; rather, their aim is to 'bring Totton in line with Nacro's Ofsted rating of 'good' by providing vocational education that connects young people

to work opportunities in the local area and is focused on quality teaching in the classroom’.

Priorities for improvement

- To ensure students starting at the college in September 2015, or who are re-enrolling for the second year of their studies, receive a high-quality induction to their courses.
- To make sure that the interim management structure and staffing in place until November 2015 are fit for purpose in enabling students to receive a high-quality learning experience.
- To work with senior leaders at Nacro to ensure that the transition arrangements in place to effect the takeover do not adversely affect students, and that they are kept informed of any developments likely to affect their experience at the college.

What plans are in place to improve the quality of provision up to November 2015, most notably teaching, learning and assessment?

Senior leaders have sensibly refrained from developing a post-inspection action plan (PIAP) for the college following the inspection. This is a pragmatic decision given the recent commencement of a four-month transition period during which they will work with staff at Nacro to ‘shadow manage’ the college. Work has started on identifying the key issues relating to, and the root causes of, the college’s poor performance in 2014/15, and this now needs to proceed quickly to ensure a comprehensive and detailed short- and long-term PIAP is in place by the end of July 2015.

Similarly, work has commenced on writing a self-assessment report for 2014/15 in conjunction with the relevant staff at Nacro to identify key strengths and areas for improvement for the provision. This report will need to reflect the college’s recently published Ofsted inspection report as well as its own evaluation of the provision, particularly of those subject areas that were not inspected. Discussions will need to take place with Nacro regarding the key judgements and grades, as well as the format of the report; while also possibly taking into account the changes being effected by Ofsted to its inspection methodology from September 2015.

Plans to implement other quality improvement activities, most notably staff training and development to improve teaching and learning, have understandably been hampered to date by both the time of year and the situation regarding staffing levels at the college and attendant financial considerations. Senior leaders are currently undergoing a process of matching staffing requirements to types of provision and anticipated numbers of students for 2015/16. A number of staff have already left the college. Improvements in teaching and learning overall may benefit from the fact that the majority of areas judged to be ‘inadequate’ at inspection were in the college’s A-level provision, which has now ceased.

Priorities for improvement

- To work with managers at Nacro to develop a PIAP for implementation by the end of July 2015.
- To similarly work with managers at Nacro to develop a self-assessment report for 2014/15 to be in place ideally by September 2015 which then informs the PIAP in identifying key actions for improvement and targets.
- To bring about rapid improvements in all aspects of teachers' classroom practice at the start of the autumn term.

What arrangements are in place to ensure effective governance and oversight of the college?

Governance of the college has understandably experienced a period of turbulence during the past few months as rumours have circulated of possible partner institutions interested in merging with the college; and, particularly so, since the announcement of a takeover by Nacro. A number of governors have resigned, while others have come to the end of their tenure of office; these have included the vice-chair.

A recent resolution passed by the governing body has reduced its membership to 12, with one vacancy for a parent governor. The clerk is confident of appointing two new student governors from September, as well as an interim vice-chair. The head of education at Nacro is now attending corporation meetings, the next one of which takes place before the end of this term. A sub-group from within the governing body has been formed to agree the terms of the merger with Nacro. The clerk is confident that the current members of the governing body have the necessary skills and expertise to exercise their necessary duties until the takeover is completed.

Recruitment of any new governors is clearly difficult, given they may only be in post until November 2015, and while the college is awaiting confirmation from senior managers at Nacro regarding the likely governance arrangements for the remainder of the year and beyond.

Priorities for improvement

- To ensure that the current governing body discharges its statutory duties in the period up to the proposed takeover and continues to closely monitor performance data and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment; most notably, the final outturn data regarding the performance of the college in 2014/15.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231 or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and provider inspection reports, please visit <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/user>.

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted