

Ealing, Hammersmith and West London College

Re-inspection monitoring visit report

Unique reference number: 130408

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Last day of inspection: 14 January 2016

Type of provider: General further education college

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Publication date: 26 January 2016

Inspection number: 10010434



Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

This is the first re-inspection monitoring visit to Ealing, Hammersmith and West London College following publication of the inspection report on 15 December 2015 which found the provider to be inadequate overall.

Ealing, Hammersmith and West London College is a large general further education college which has four main sites at Ealing, Hammersmith, Acton and Southall. It recruits learners from across west London and neighbouring boroughs. Courses are offered in almost all subject areas. Around 20,000 learners study at the college. Most courses are taught at the college sites, but the college also works in partnership with nine subcontractors. The college has learners on higher education programmes. Around three quarters of learners at the college are from a Black or minority ethnic heritage.

Themes

Use of information about learners' and apprentices' prior attainment to plan learning that enables them all to achieve their goals and fulfil their potential

At the time of the previous inspection, staff were making too little use of information about learners' prior learning to plan individual learning effectively and enable learners to make good progress. Teachers were not sufficiently skilled at planning and teaching lessons that enabled learners to understand clearly what they were learning in lessons and on their course. Too often, teachers set work that was too easy for more-able learners or too hard for others. The college's curriculum included some low-level courses which did not lead to good progression for learners to either employment or further education and training.

Since the inspection, managers have worked hard to improve the use and timeliness of assessment of learners' existing skills and knowledge so that teachers have a better understanding of learners' starting points. Managers have introduced a new form for lesson planning and new schemes of work that encourage teachers to think about how they are meeting individual learners' needs during each lesson. Teachers have attended staff development workshops around planning for individual learning and managers have planned to further develop this with follow-up staff development sessions.

Priorities for improvement

Leaders and managers must:

- make good use of information about learners' prior attainment and the results of assessments of their existing skills and knowledge to plan individual learning

- make more, and better, use of learners' feedback to improve teaching and ensure that teaching meets the needs of all learners, including the most able
- ensure that learners whose existing levels of English and mathematics meet the requirements of their study programme or apprenticeship are encouraged to develop these skills further to aid their progression
- identify and remove low-level courses which are unlikely to allow learners to progress to employment or further study
- use data to check the effectiveness of initial advice and guidance by monitoring the rate of drop-out or early transfer to other courses
- ensure that the principles of the study programme are being met, including the provision of relevant and well-planned work experience or work-related activities which meet learners' career aspirations and/or help them to make well-informed choices about their progression
- ensure that learners on study programmes receive high-quality careers advice and guidance linked to their aspirations and abilities.

Learners' rates of attendance

Learners' rates of attendance at, and punctuality to, lessons have improved over the previous three years but at the previous inspection they were still not high enough. In too many lessons, especially those for English and mathematics, learners did not attend often enough and this slowed the progress they were making with these subjects. Since the inspection, the college has taken robust action to improve attendance and it is now 88% for the college as a whole. However, there remain some areas of the curriculum where attendance is low and where the action taken so far by managers has not been effective. Teachers and tutors now provide much more timely help and support for learners as managers focus strongly on rates of attendance as part of performance management. However, managers have more work to do to ensure that the reasons behind poor attendance are always correctly identified, particularly in those areas where improvement has been slow.

Priorities for improvement

Leaders and managers must:

- focus managers' energy and attention on those curriculum areas where attendance is still not improving sufficiently
- ensure that the reasons for individual learners' poor attendance are identified and that staff take prompt action to provide support
- better identify links between weaker teaching and poor attendance
- ensure that learners understand the importance of attendance as a work-related skill through activities such as work experience and through building links with employers and encouraging employers to work with the college on presentations and learners' activities.

Target setting for learners and apprentices to raise their aspirations and support them to achieve

Teachers' and assessors' skills in setting targets for learners and apprentices to raise their aspirations and support them to achieve vary too much across different subjects. At the previous inspection, teachers and managers were not sharing the good practice in some curriculum areas such as English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), catering and child care, while in other areas teachers and assessors were too slow to set targets with learners, or the targets were not matched closely enough to learners' aspirations. Learners on these courses were not making progress quickly enough to achieve. Achievement was particularly low for learners on AS level courses, as many learners were unlikely to achieve their target grades due to their poor levels of English. Managers have raised entry requirements for learners starting AS levels in 2015/16 so that the vast majority now have a GCSE in English at grade C or above. However, there is further scope to review the entry requirements and the curriculum the college offers to ensure that learners can achieve their targets and make good progress with their studies.

Priorities for improvement

Managers must:

- further improve initial advice and guidance and entry requirements for A and AS level courses to identify those combinations and grades of GCSE that best equip learners for success with further academic study
- ensure that target setting for those learners who fall behind with their studies is appropriate and effective, avoiding broad and general targets which do not help learners to understand what they need to do to improve
- evaluate and identify the best ways to provide support for those learners who fail to achieve their deadlines for the submission of work or targets for achievement and/or attendance
- investigate the development of a curriculum that allows learners to take a mixture of A levels and vocational programmes at level 3 to better meet the needs and aspirations of learners for whom a programme of three A levels is inappropriate
- check vocational areas where learners start with a variety of different types of entry qualification to identify how these different starting points might affect learners' progress, and plan to provide workshops to fill the gaps in knowledge and skills before learners start to struggle.

Actions to improve teaching, learning and assessment, including to improve the quality and timeliness of feedback to learners on written work

The previous inspection noted that managers had eradicated much of the poor practice in teaching through robust performance management and good staff development. However, leaders and managers had more to do to ensure that teaching and learning was of a consistently high quality.

Since the inspection, leaders and managers have continued to strive to improve teaching and learning through a number of initiatives. Managers have introduced a carefully tailored programme of staff development and are now checking its effectiveness using a series of learning walks to observe teachers' practice. All teachers have access to a growing repository of good online learning resources that they can use in their lessons. Managers have introduced an 'English marking code' to try and ensure consistency in the quality of feedback on, and correction of, learners' written work. However, as yet it is not clear whether all teachers have the necessary English skills themselves to be able to implement the code effectively.

Priorities for improvement

Managers and teachers must:

- ensure that learning walks continue to focus appropriately on areas for improvement identified through inspection and the college's own observations of teaching and learning
- develop vocational teachers' ability to improve learners' English and mathematics skills during lessons
- rapidly identify gaps in vocational teachers' English and mathematic skills and provide an effective programme of staff development to ensure they have the confidence and skills to correct learners' work accurately
- develop and implement quality assurance arrangements to check that teachers are using the new 'English marking code' correctly
- ensure systems are in place to measure the impact of improvements made and to ensure that improvement is taking place quickly enough
- consider and explore additional ways to improve teaching rather than relying too much on formal graded observations and learning walks
- develop teachers' ability to check learning and understanding during lessons and observers' ability to evaluate how well learning is taking place
- ensure that teachers and tutors plan to develop learners' understanding of fundamental British values
- ensure a college-wide approach to important aspects of quality assurance so that all areas of the college perform to a similarly high standard, and ensure that quality improvement plans for study programmes and for personal development, behaviour and welfare are comprehensive and identify key actions for improvement accurately and effectively.

Actions to improve the quality of teaching of English and mathematics

Improving the provision in English and mathematics was a key area for improvement at the previous inspection. Leaders and managers are addressing this through various sections of the post-inspection action plan but have not ensured this provides a coherent approach to bringing about improvement. The quality improvement plan for study programmes does not focus sufficiently on actions to ensure that learners achieve the English and mathematics components of their programmes. Managers

are taking action to improve vocational teachers' skills and confidence in tackling English and mathematics activities during their lessons to ensure that learners develop these skills alongside their vocational skills.

Priorities for improvement

Managers must:

- ensure that sufficient attention is paid to actions to improve learners' English and mathematical skills in quality improvement plans
- make good use of data to identify curriculum areas whose good practice can be shared and to identify those where the provision of English and mathematics is working less well
- ensure that English and mathematics teaching is linked strongly to learners' vocational subjects to support their learning
- ensure that initial advice and guidance includes sufficient emphasis on English and mathematics skills so that learners have a better understanding of how these skills relate to the vocational courses they are studying
- ensure that study programme tutors take responsibility for all components of the study programmes
- ensure that teachers can easily arrange for all their learning resources to be checked for spelling, grammar and punctuation before being used with learners, and produce standardised learning resources
- ensure that timetables are devised to give sufficient priority to English and mathematics lessons.

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