

# The Maltings College

Reinspection monitoring visit report

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**Unique reference number:** 139433

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**Last day of inspection:** 14 January 2016

**Type of provider:** 16–19 academy

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**Publication date:** 29 January 2016

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**Inspection number:** 10009947



## Monitoring visit: main findings

### Context and focus of visit

This is the fourth follow-up reinspection monitoring visit to The Maltings College following publication of the inspection report on 25 February 2015, which found the provider to be inadequate overall.

#### Improvement in outcomes for students

#### Reasonable progress

Managers have successfully improved retention rates during the current year, through improved advice and guidance at enrolment and the improving quality of teaching.

Teachers formally assessed students' performance at two points during the autumn term. The data show that a large majority of students are on track to achieve their vocational qualifications. A comparison of teacher assessments from the latter part of the previous academic year and actual results shows that teacher assessments are generally reliable. Students are positive about the progress they are making and have increasing confidence in their developing skills. For example, hairdressing students were observed in the salon working with external clients and using a range of techniques competently.

Teachers' assessments of students' progress in English and mathematics also suggest much-improved outcomes for functional skills and GCSEs in these subjects this year. Nevertheless, some students' progress in their vocational work is hindered by weak literacy skills.

Managers have developed a range of strategies to improve attendance and this is having an impact. Attendance at some English and mathematics lessons is lower than elsewhere but it has shown improvement since the time of the previous visit. Despite the strenuous efforts of managers and other staff, about 30% of students have overall attendance records of below 90%. Many of these students have social, emotional and/or medical problems. An additional manager has been appointed to lead on welfare issues, and to support attendance through home visits, and links with other agencies. This work is beginning to have an impact with a number of individuals.

Teachers and other staff are developing students' employability skills better than in the past. Students behave well in lessons and around college; they display good attitudes to learning, take pride in their personal appearance and wear the correct uniform. Some students have relevant external work experience but this is not the case for all.

#### Improvement in English and mathematics provision

#### Reasonable progress

Teaching, learning and assessment in English and mathematics lessons are improving. English and mathematics teachers have very good rapport with their

students and are supportive and encouraging. Students engage well in lessons and are keen to learn, even when their experiences in the past have been discouraging. Teachers give much individual help in lessons but do not always tailor the work effectively enough to the specific abilities of the students present. In mathematics, analyses of individual students' marks in different sections of a GCSE practice paper provide helpful information for both students and teachers about the specific areas that students need to work on. In mathematics, students do not always do enough examples to consolidate their learning thoroughly. Teachers offer resources for independent work, including useful online resources, but they rely too much on students doing the work voluntarily.

During the visit, inspectors saw some good examples where teachers corrected students' spoken English in lessons as errors occurred, for example when answering questions. Students' literacy skills remain an important area for development, with too much written work showing spelling, grammar and punctuation errors. Teachers do not consistently correct or comment upon mistakes. Where teachers do make pertinent comments on students' work, there is limited evidence of students following these up and putting the advice into practice. Weak literacy skills also hinder students' ability to interpret problem-solving mathematics questions.

Some vocational teachers have developed strategies to help improve students' writing skills. For example, in beauty therapy, teachers use writing frames to provide a structure. Most vocational teachers are giving better attention to key subject specific vocabulary. For example, in light motor vehicle maintenance, the teacher used a multiple-choice quiz to reinforce learning, including the spelling of technical terms.

Staff training has helped teachers of vocational subjects to build in more opportunities for developing English and mathematics skills. For example, in a light motor vehicle maintenance lesson, students were asked to work out the financial impact of using a technique that speeded up replacement of a component.

Students studying sport off-site through a sub-contractor are now attending the main college for mathematics lessons to help ensure that they receive teaching of suitable quality.

### **Improvement in teaching, learning and assessment**

### **Reasonable progress**

Leaders and managers have implemented a range of strategies to improve the quality of teaching and learning and these are clearly contributing to improvements. Most staffing issues have been resolved and permanent teachers are now in post in most vocational areas.

The available evidence about the quality of teaching and learning across the college, including inspection observations, the college's own records and student feedback shows more consistency in the quality of teaching. While areas for improvement remain, there are far fewer significant weaknesses than in the past. More formal assessment and progress monitoring are now well embedded through a college tracking system.

During the inspection, visits to lessons showed a number of strengths, including good engagement, good attitudes to learning, good behaviour, some effective group work and some effective use of questioning techniques. Areas for improvement included late arrival to lessons. Although teachers have good information about students' skills and abilities, including their literacy and numeracy levels, they do not make enough use of this in planning lessons and in considering how different students might learn best, and in setting tasks accordingly. Consequently, some students complete work rapidly whilst others struggle and need more individual help. In addition, teachers' monitoring of individual progress in lessons is not always thorough and astute enough.

Managers use evidence from their own observations and learning walks to identify common strengths and areas for development, which are used to plan training to improve teaching skills. Leaders make good use of expertise from the local academy, with training sessions delivered by expert teachers and opportunities for teachers from the Maltings to observe in the school. Weekly continuing professional development sessions cover specific topics. Coaches continue to work with individual teachers where the college has identified that there is a need for more focused ongoing development. Informal support plans are also helping to develop teaching skills.

### **Improvement in governance, leadership and the quality assurance arrangements      Significant progress**

The robust arrangements previously put in place to promote improvement have continued and been strengthened by additional staff, such as a college manager, with a focus on student attendance and welfare. Leaders and managers, and the practices that they have put in place, are having a significant impact on quality of provision at the college. Numerous indicators reflect improvement, such as student and staff attendance, student retention, student feedback and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.

Teachers clearly have high expectations of students in terms of behaviour, attitudes to learning and punctuality. Students who have been at the college for more than a year can explain how things have improved, giving specific examples, such as the subject targets and tracker that they now have, but did not have previously.

Leaders and managers have developed and implemented a robust quality assurance system. This produces comprehensive reports that are discussed as regular agenda items in meetings at all levels. All aspects of the quality assurance cycle link together very well, covering a wide range of evidence. Leaders and managers identify concerns quickly and put in place effective interventions. At all levels, there is improved data collection, management and use.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is continuing to improve. Some variation in practice remains, but less so than previously; there is stronger practice overall. New permanent teachers have been appointed recently in light motor vehicle maintenance. Although it is too early to assess the full impact, initial signs are positive. Students are up to date with their work. They are keen to discuss the progress they are making, and how they will use this to develop their careers.

Quality assurance processes have been used effectively to deal with areas of underperformance in teaching, learning and assessment.

Governors on the governor advisory body have a detailed understanding of all key aspects of The Maltings. They are kept informed by much better quality information. Governors hold frequent and regular meetings to discuss relevant issues and provide very high levels of informed support and challenge to the senior leaders.

### **Improvement in the tutorial programme and careers education and guidance**

### **Reasonable progress**

Managers have put a comprehensive tutorial programme in place and students have a one-hour group tutorial every week, focusing on a range of relevant themes. These include general careers education, preparing for careers in their vocational area, citizenship, the student voice and healthy lifestyles. The lead tutor in this area has devised high-quality materials for all tutors to use, but there is variation in delivery, with examples of weaker practice. All tutors have had training in preventing radicalisation and extremism but they have not yet delivered this aspect to students.

During the autumn term, tutors placed a strong focus on support for students applying to higher education within the tutorial programme but less of a focus for those with other career aspirations. This term, college staff plan to focus on students who are not applying to university. Managers have arranged for an external adviser to deliver sessions to student groups, highlighting all the different options available to them. Managers are also planning to use successful college leavers, such as one who is now an apprentice in a prestigious London hotel, to highlight different career opportunities.

Tutors make their own arrangements for one-to-one progress reviews as these are not formally scheduled. A sample of individual learning plans showed that there is considerable variation in their use and reviews do not focus precisely enough on what students need to do to improve their work. Nevertheless, students speak positively about the support and individual help that they receive from teachers and tutors, and report that when they seek help it is readily provided.