

City College Coventry

Re-inspection monitoring visit report

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Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

This is the first re-inspection monitoring visit to City College Coventry following publication of the inspection report on 31 December 2015 which found the provider to be inadequate for overall effectiveness and for each of the key judgements: effectiveness of leadership and management; the quality of teaching, learning and assessment; personal behaviour, development and welfare; and outcomes for learners. All provision types inspected were judged inadequate, with the exception of adult learning programmes, which required improvement.

At the time of the monitoring visit, the new interim Principal had been in post for under a month, and the nominee (the interim vice-principal for curriculum and quality) had been in post for eight weeks. On the evening of the final day of the visit, the governors were due to consider the first draft of the post-inspection action plan and the Principal's report. These provide an analysis of the need for change and propose how the college should move forward.

Themes

The fitness for purpose of the post-inspection action plan, including reporting arrangements and the rigour of scrutiny by senior leaders and governors

The early draft of the post-inspection action plan encapsulates the areas needing further improvement from the most recent inspection report in the form of nine 'issues to be addressed'. These include learners' success rates; teaching, learning and assessment; and the management of learners' progress. Leaders and managers have been rigorous and systematic in establishing the root causes of these issues and weaknesses in provision. Key elements of the plan require further development, which leaders recognise; for example, the intended outcomes of improvement actions are not always specific enough and there is a risk of confusing the completion of actions with the impact achieved. Such potential confusion risks providing leaders, managers and governors with an overly positive picture of progress.

Leaders recognise that it is not consistently clear from the plan where the data and information will come from to demonstrate progress in rectifying issues. They rightly plan to use reports from the existing quality improvement cycle to provide the source information to enable them to measure progress and impact. In doing this, assertions of progress may be corroborated and triangulated with performance information, enabling leaders, managers and governors to be confident in the robustness of the information they scrutinise.

Priorities for improvement

- Adjust the post-inspection action plan to ensure that the intended outcomes of improvement actions are consistently specific and measurable.
- Ensure that the plan shows clearly the difference between the progress made in completing actions and the impact the actions have had.
- Identify the reports from the quality improvement cycle that provide the necessary source information to measure success and ensure appropriate triangulation and reliability of the evidence; amend the timing of reports from the quality improvement cycle, where appropriate, to ensure triangulation of information.
- Ensure both leaders and governors have thorough oversight of the progress made in improving the provision through regular scrutiny of the post-inspection action plan.

The implementation of study programmes including: the development of learners' employment skills, in particular at levels 1 and 2; the provision of work experience and work-related learning; the promotion of high professional standards; and teaching, learning and assessment in English and mathematics

Inspectors judged that managers had not implemented fully the requirements of study programmes for learners aged 16 to 19, with the effect that too few learners were prepared for their next steps in learning and life. Learning was not sufficiently tailored to their needs, aspirations and capabilities. Too few learners at levels 1 and 2 had sufficient opportunity to develop their skills for employment, and the proportion of learners who developed good skills in English and mathematics remained too low.

There had been no college-wide policy on providing work experience for learners on programmes at levels 1 and 2, which is now resolved. Heads of school have targets to enable all learners on study programmes to participate in work experience and work-related learning. Managers and staff had not fully understood the need to develop further the English and mathematics skills of learners who had already achieved A*–C grades in these subjects.

Priorities for improvement

- Monitor and evaluate the impact of the newly appointed careers guidance specialist on ensuring that learners have appropriate individual learning plans.
- Ensure that all tutors develop and support learners' individual learning plans to a consistently high standard in order to promote learners' progress and progression into sustainable employment or further study.

- Work closely with employers to ensure high-quality work experience and work-related learning in order to:
 - provide learners with a real experience of work
 - develop learners' employability skills in areas such as problem solving and working to commercial speed
 - ensure that teachers have appropriately demanding expectations of learners and use the feedback from work experience to inform teaching, learning and assessment.
- Equip teachers with the skills they need to improve learners' skills in English and mathematics, so that learners can see the importance and relevance of these to success in their chosen careers and can achieve in these subjects according to their potential.

Learners' attendance

Learners' attendance and punctuality had been an area for improvement in the previous inspection in June 2014 and remained so at the most recent inspection in November 2015.

Leaders and managers have established root causes of learners' poor attendance. These include:

- weaknesses in initial advice and guidance and initial assessment to ensure that learners are on the right programme of study for their needs, aspirations and prior learning
- dull teaching which fails to motivate learners to attend
- some poor collection, analysis and monitoring of attendance data, leading to a failure to identify learners at risk of not achieving their learning goals and college staff not making appropriate and timely interventions to re-engage and support learners.

Priorities for improvement

- Ensure the reliability of attendance data.
- Ensure that the monitoring of attendance leads to appropriate interventions to support and re-engage learners at risk of not making the progress of which they are capable, or of withdrawing from their programme of study.
- Ensure that learners' attendance data become one of a range of key performance indicators in the evaluation of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and contribute to the appraisal of individual teachers.

Monitoring of learners' progress and intervention arrangements where learners are at risk of not achieving to their full potential

At the previous inspection, inspectors found that too few learners made good progress, and teachers' expectations of their learners were too low. Too few teachers understood clearly whether learners were making good progress in their learning. Managers and teachers made poor use of data and information to track and monitor the progress of individual learners. Not all teachers ensured that they monitored learners' progress in lessons, and they did not make sufficient checks to ensure that learners thoroughly understood topics before moving on to the next.

Managers have increased their expectations of teachers to record progress using an electronic system of data collection for this purpose. Staff have recently received training and development in the use of the systems and how to input information. Currently, there are many inconsistencies in the completion of these records.

Leaders have strengthened the review of learners' progress through structured meetings to monitor learners' progress and attendance. While still not fully embedded, this approach should enable leaders to identify and action improvements at an earlier stage. In some areas of the college, the process is beginning to support more effective management, but there is significant inconsistency in the quality of actions taken and the expected impact of these actions.

Leaders have placed a clear emphasis on ensuring that managers and teachers understand what is expected of them and what they are accountable for, but this has not yet resulted in a clear and tangible, college-wide cultural change. Although leaders are confident that their ability to identify learners at risk is now more reliable, it is too early to tell whether this will support the precise identification of learners at risk of leaving their programme early or not achieving all of their planned learning goals. Currently, leaders have not yet linked the outcomes from teaching and learning observations, and the resulting improvement actions, to the range of associated risks of learners becoming disengaged.

Priorities for improvement

- Embed fully the arrangements for the monitoring of learners' progress in all areas of the college and set clear expectations of teachers.
- Rapidly increase the rigour of quality improvement interventions, ensuring that teachers and managers have appropriate expectations and accountability.
- Develop a routine and thorough process for ensuring the quality of learners' action plans and systematically follow this up.
- Ensure that the data and information used to inform quality improvement are accurate, reliable and used consistently well.
- Use the information from the review of the observation of teaching, learning and assessment processes to inform the overview of the risk of learners not achieving.

The development, monitoring and evaluation of teachers' and assessors' skills to ensure stimulating learning so that all learners make at least good progress towards appropriately challenging targets

At the previous inspection, inspectors found that teachers' expectations of learners were too low. Many teachers did not use the information they had on learners' previous skills and knowledge to plan learning well. Teachers often set tasks that were too easy or too challenging. Leaders did not hold managers and teachers sufficiently to account for ensuring that teaching, learning and assessment were good or that learners made good progress. Too many learners made slow progress. The development of individual learning targets for learners lacked detail and did not link previously acquired skills and knowledge to those they needed to develop.

Managers have carried out some initial work to support teachers in understanding the importance of college processes and how these should be implemented, but this implementation is still inconsistent. For example, many teachers still lack confidence in the use of electronic tracking and monitoring processes.

Teachers are not always clear about the expectations on them to ensure learners understand their next steps in learning. In many lessons, teachers set tasks to be completed rather than identifying clear learning outcomes for the group or appropriately tailored targets for individual learners. Learners have a weak understanding of the new skills they are developing and how these link to previous and current learning. Teachers do not reinforce clearly how learners may make progress and do not structure the intended learning to enable learners to know their current progress to date. Many sessions have a strong focus on assessment preparation without sufficient emphasis on the skills learners should be gaining to demonstrate good progress. Learners' understanding of their personal and learning targets is still too variable. Few learners are able to recall these, know where they might find them or relate them to tutorial support.

Priorities for improvement

- Ensure that support staff share areas of effective practice and extend their confidence in using the college's tracking and monitoring systems.
- Ensure that all teachers have a thorough understanding of what leaders expect of them regarding how to plan lessons that focus effectively on clearly identified learning outcomes.
- Support teachers in planning learning that identifies the skills that learners will have developed in order to make effective progress and ensure that learners understand when they have successfully acquired them.
- Ensure that all learners know and understand what their next steps in learning are.

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