

# Stanmore College

Re-inspection monitoring visit report

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**Name of lead inspector:** Richard Pemble HMI

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## Monitoring visit: main findings

### Context and focus of visit

This is the second follow-up re-inspection monitoring visit to Stanmore College following publication of the inspection report on 9 November 2015 which found the provider to be inadequate overall.

Since the previous visit, the principal has continued to oversee the implementation of the college improvement plan. During this visit, inspectors gathered evidence to enable them to make judgements about the progress leaders, managers and teachers have made in achieving the previously agreed themes.

### Themes

**Improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment to enable all students to make good progress, as a result of interesting and stimulating learning activities and clear and accurate feedback on their work.**      **Reasonable progress**

Managers and teachers continue to apply substantial effort to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. They have made good progress in implementing plans for training teachers to develop the skills they need through an effective mix of relevant activities, which include targeted peer observations, 'bite-sized' training sessions and frequent learning walks.

However, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, while improving, is not yet consistently good for students in all subject areas. For example, too frequently, lesson objectives do not express clearly the progress and development teachers expect students to make and therefore the students do not know what progress they should be making. Too often, teachers express lesson objectives as a series of tasks or activities for students to complete.

In the better examples, teachers plan and implement activities that enable students to make progress on specific areas of development that they have yet to achieve. They have higher expectations of what their students can achieve in the time available and they provide the motivation and enthusiasm to help students achieve specific lesson objectives.

Managers have recently completed an audit of teachers' marking of students' work to evaluate the quality of feedback. Their evaluation concurred with inspectors' findings that, while the quality of teachers' feedback to students about the quality of their work and what they needed to do to improve further was improving, there were too many instances where this was not the case.

**Improving students' attendance at, and punctuality to, lessons by rigorous monitoring and swift intervention when their attendance and punctuality declines; ensure students with poor attendance receive relevant support.**

**Reasonable progress**

Students' attendance at, and punctuality to, lessons continue to improve as a result of managers' careful monitoring of attendance and swift interventions when these decline. The overall rate of attendance remains below senior leaders' target. Students who encounter barriers to their learning receive very good support from learning mentors to help overcome these and to get up to date with their work. Students who have high rates of attendance value the increased emphasis on all students attending frequently as they experience fewer disruptions to their learning from latecomers.

Managers are not yet able to evaluate fully the impact of their actions to support individual students to improve their attendance. Systems for providing this data are underdeveloped, and managers would benefit from more comprehensive information to make judgements on the effectiveness of the different types of support offered to students.

Students' attendance at lessons for English and mathematics remains below the overall college rate, despite considerable emphasis by all staff on the importance of achieving these qualifications. Students' attendance at the recently implemented workshops to help students prepare for examinations in English and mathematics has been higher than for lessons earlier in the academic year.

**Improving the proportion of students who achieve qualifications in English and mathematics by ensuring teachers of these subjects plan and teach lessons that enable students to improve the skills that they have not yet mastered.**

**Reasonable progress**

Managers and teachers have carried out considerable work to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in lessons for qualifications in English and mathematics. Until results for tests in functional skills and examinations for GCSE qualifications in these subjects are available, it is not possible to evaluate the full impact of this work.

To help students prepare effectively for their examinations and tests and to tackle students' previous underperformance, managers have introduced a series of workshops to enable students to practise the specific skills in which they are not yet sufficiently proficient. Teachers plan these workshops well, setting individual students, or small groups of students, tasks and activities that relate specifically to their individual development needs. The large majority of students are able to describe clearly the improvements that they have made in their English or mathematical skills as a result of this intervention.

Teachers of subjects other than English or mathematics are developing greater ownership and responsibility for the development of their students' skills in English and mathematics. They use an increasing range of mathematical examples in lessons and they are becoming more proficient in correcting students' poor spelling, punctuation and grammar, and providing strategies to help students improve.

**Improving the proportion of students who develop their skills for work and their vocational skills by completing and evaluating high-quality work-experience placements.**

**Reasonable progress**

Teachers and managers have worked effectively to ensure that all students on level 2 study programmes have, or will have, completed a relevant external work-experience placement by the end of the academic year. Those students on level 1 study programmes, for whom it would be relevant and appropriate, have also had this opportunity. However, students do not always appreciate what they have learned as a result of completing a placement and how this may inform their next step in education or training. Managers have not yet evaluated effectively the impact external work experience has had on the progress and development of their students.

As yet, too few students on level 3 study programmes, for whom it would be appropriate, have the opportunity to complete a relevant external work-experience placement in order to develop further their practical skills or skills for work. The majority of level 3 students are likely to move on to degree-level courses and currently benefit from work-related activity in lessons and tutorials; however, students whose next step is to employment or an apprenticeship do not yet have sufficient opportunities to complete a relevant external work-experience placement as part of their study programme.

**Ensuring managers have accurate data and information about the performance of the students and teachers in their departments and that they use these to set precise actions for improvement and intervene swiftly when improvements are not being achieved.**

**Significant progress**

Senior managers ensure that data for a wide range of previously agreed key performance indicators is produced at least monthly. They review this data meticulously to identify improvements and further actions for improvements. Departmental and subject-area managers value their greater access to data about the progress and performance of the students in their departments and are able to respond far more swiftly and effectively where performance in key areas declines or is not improving rapidly enough.

Managers are developing well their ability to use data to evaluate the impact of their actions for improvement. They are held to account by senior leaders in fortnightly academic management group meetings, and as a result, they are now able to use data on the progress level 3 students are making to target more specific interventions so that these students are likely to make at least the progress their prior attainment indicates they should.

**Ensuring governors and senior leaders monitor frequently the progress students are making in different subject areas and intervene swiftly when actions for improvement are not being achieved within planned timescales.**

**Reasonable progress**

Until a complete set of students' results for the 2015/16 academic year is available, it is not possible to evaluate fully the impact of the work of senior leaders and governors in improving the provision. However, the very thorough work done by senior leaders indicates that a significantly improved proportion of students are on target to achieve their qualifications in the current year. The senior leadership team has effectively stemmed the decline in the proportion of students leaving their course during the autumn term.

Senior leaders keep governors well informed about the progress that current students are making, their rates of attendance and other key performance indicators. As a result of much clearer and comprehensive performance information, governors know what needs to improve at the college; they now ask a wider range of pertinent and challenging questions about the effectiveness of senior leaders' and managers' actions for improvement. They hold senior leaders to account more effectively for their actions.

Senior leaders meet frequently with departmental managers to discuss the progress their students and teachers are making, to identify those students at risk of not achieving, and to agree specific actions for improvement or interventions. Performance management procedures have been used effectively to help underperforming teachers improve or to remove them from employment at the college.

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