

Ealing, Hammersmith and West London College

Re-inspection monitoring visit report

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Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

This is the first follow-up 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 subcontractors. The college has learners on higher education programmes. Around three quarters of learners at the college are from a minority ethnic heritage.

Themes

Actions to improve the quality of teaching and learning and to ensure that they are increasingly of a consistently high quality

Significant progress

At the last inspection, managers had identified well the weaknesses in teaching, learning and assessment. They had started to implement appropriate actions to improve learners' achievement and had successfully eradicated much poor practice. Since then, through the college's 'West London way' initiative, leaders and managers have continued with their relentless focus on improving the quality of provision for learners, and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment has further improved.

Managers, including curriculum managers, know their weaker teachers and weaker areas of provision and take prompt actions to improve them. The college's capacity to further improve teaching, learning and assessment is also being improved by the robust use of performance management. Poorer teachers are well supported to improve, but the college has taken good action to remove teachers where necessary. Trainers and assessors for apprenticeship provision are fully included in improvement and professional development initiatives.

Leaders and managers are clear about their improvement targets and responsibilities and ensure that the college's arrangements for judging the quality of teaching, learning and assessment are effective. The rigorous scheme for the observation and improvement of teaching, learning and assessment is securely placed within good overall arrangements for quality assurance and improvement. The college's data show that nearly 80% of lessons observed are good or better. The lesson observation team is now smaller, aiding consistency in judgement, with improved training and standardisation.

Good arrangements for peer observation, and the work of the 25 'Google innovators' and 'Beacon teachers', are developing a sustainable culture of self-improvement among teachers.

The better planning of learning, enabling good or better progress, especially for the most able Significant progress

Managers and teachers now take significantly greater account of the information which they receive about their learners at the start of learning programmes, including learners' prior attainment and aspirations. As a result, they better understand learners' starting points and plan effectively to meet individual learners' needs. In particular, teachers now plan learning activities which embrace the needs of most-able learners who are supported and challenged to make the progress of which they are capable.

Managers have improved the process for identifying learners who are at risk of not achieving their targets. Previously, the assessment of risk level was based solely on learners' attendance. Managers, and in particular teachers, now consider learners' behaviour and standards of work and the progress that learners have made from their starting points, together with their capacity to meet deadlines.

Managers and teachers make much more effective use of the college's system for monitoring learners' progress. They identify accurately learners' starting points and those who are falling behind and are at risk of not achieving their target grade. Managers and teachers intervene quickly to provide these learners with additional support to get them back on track.

Teachers are now much more accountable for the progress and success of their learners and have regular meetings with their managers to evaluate the impact of actions they are taking to improve learners' progress.

The improved use of target setting for learners and apprentices, to raise their aspirations and support them to achieve Reasonable progress

Since the last inspection, leaders and managers have taken appropriate action to improve the quality of targets set for learners. They have introduced an online tool for the setting and recording of learners' targets, with staff training on how best to use the technology and how to draft targets. Managers make effective use of information about learners' prior attainment to set their minimum target grades. Senior managers acknowledge that further training is required to ensure that all teachers use these data, and data on learners' aspirational target grades, to its full potential to move learners to higher levels of attainment most effectively.

Managers have ensured that across the majority of courses teachers use the online tool for recording learners' targets. On study programmes, in most cases, this includes targets for English and mathematics. While there are areas of good practice in the way targets are written to help learners understand how to make improvements, this is not the case for all curriculum areas and teachers do not consistently review targets with learners.

Most teachers use the electronic mark book to record learners' progress and learners also use this well to monitor their own performance. Managers and teachers of A-level courses use college-devised systems, better suiting this provision. They monitor well their learners' progress relative to their target grades.

On apprenticeship programmes, managers have improved the tracking, monitoring and target setting of learners. Staff still need to improve further the targets set for apprentices and ensure that these relate not just to the completion of tasks but help apprentices know how to improve their skills in specific areas of their training.

On A-level programmes, managers have introduced more stringent entry requirements and have ensured, through better interview and selection, that learners have the right qualifications to be successful. It is too early to judge the impact of these initiatives.

The improvement of learners' rates of attendance Significant progress

At the last inspection, although improved over the previous three years, learners' rates of attendance were not yet high enough. Since then, leaders and managers have ensured that their continued improvement remains a key priority. Attendance has further improved, often reflecting what learners consider to be improved teaching and learning in their survey comments.

Overall attendance to date, in the current academic year, is good, at 88%, compared with 84% in the previous year. There is a similar significant improvement for learners aged 16 to 18 of five percentage points and attendance rates for adults have also significantly improved. Attendance at English and mathematics lessons has improved, but at 80% requires further improvement. The attendance of learners looked after is particularly high, at 91% – much improved over 2014/15.

Significantly more robust identification and follow-up of poor attendance by staff has helped to improve learners' attendance. Managers and teachers recognise good attendance as an essential partner to the successful improvement of teaching, learning and assessment. They now consistently communicate to learners their high expectations for attendance and punctuality. Teaching teams now ensure that they give a consistent message about the essential priority of high attendance in order to achieve. This is supported by attendance targets and league tables.

Learners' poor attendance is now systematically identified and followed up speedily to ensure that learners understand that it will not be tolerated. There are many good examples of productive initiatives across the college where subject and course areas have introduced incentives and/or sanctions to help foster learners' better attendance.

Ensuring improvement in the quality of teaching and learning and outcomes in English and mathematics **Significant progress**

Leaders and managers have taken very swift action to improve the quality of English and mathematics provision, both in terms of teaching, learning and assessment and for learners' achievements.

As part of the overall college strategy to improve teaching, learning and assessment, leaders and managers have ensured that the better teaching of English and mathematics has a high priority. The good training for teachers is responsive to areas for development identified through lesson observations. It focuses well on strategies to support and challenge learners to achieve their aspirations. Teachers now plan lessons well and ensure that learners work on specific activities to improve their skills in the areas they find the most difficult.

Learners are more aware of what they need to do to achieve their targets in English and mathematics. However, further work is needed to ensure that teachers fully record learners' progress in order to ensure that subsequent teaching is planned to maximise further skills development.

Managers have acted to remove teachers whose performance was weak and the number of temporary/agency staff has been significantly reduced. More substantive teaching posts are helping to ensure consistency of delivery for learners. The timetabling of English and mathematics for the next academic year will build on the work already done to prioritise the timing of English and mathematics in core learning time. Managers have introduced additional lessons, workshops and individual support sessions to help learners make better progress, and to help concentrate on overcoming particular barriers faced by individual learners.

The managers and teachers of learners' main programmes of study understand their responsibilities for ensuring that learners make good progress in improving their English and mathematics. Teachers work increasingly effectively with English and mathematics specialists to help learners understand the relevance of the subjects to their core studies.

As a result of these improvements, a higher proportion of learners are on track to achieve their English and mathematics at an appropriate level, and a higher proportion of learners are supported well to take the higher-level GCSE examinations in these subjects than in previous years.

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