

City of Bristol College

Re-inspection monitoring visit report

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Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

This is the second follow up re-inspection monitoring visit to City of Bristol College following publication of the inspection report on 10 March 2016 which found the provider to be inadequate overall.

At the inspection in January 2016 inspectors judged overall effectiveness; the effectiveness of leadership and management; personal development, behaviour and welfare; outcomes for learners and apprenticeships to be inadequate. Teaching, learning and assessment; 16 to 19 study programmes and adult learning programmes were judged to require improvement and provision for learners with high needs was judged to be good.

During the monitoring visit, inspectors focused on themes and priorities for improvement identified at the first monitoring visit on 12 and 13 April 2016.

Themes

The quality and implementation of an action plan Reasonable progress to tackle the weaknesses identified during the inspection.

Since the previous monitoring visit, managers have responded well to inspectors' judgements of the priorities for improvement. The action plan now includes actions and long-term targets with clearer statements about how these will improve the college. College leaders have now included dates for completion of all actions and identified the member of staff responsible for leading the actions.

Leaders and governors are monitoring the progress of actions and most have been completed on time or, where completion dates have yet to be reached, are progressing well. However, they have yet to incorporate short-term milestones into the action plan. As a result, they do not have a sufficiently reliable method of monitoring progress on actions to improve learners' outcomes in 2016/17.

College leaders and governors are working with senior leaders from an outstanding college to benefit from their experience of leading improvements and to develop a set of key performance indicators that are easily understood and provide a clear picture of progress in improving provision. As a result, they are more aware of the data they need to scrutinise and how to use it to analyse the performance of the college. They have also made links with successful local schools to gain experience and advice on English and mathematics.

Senior leaders are monitoring closely the performance of each curriculum area and increasing their effectiveness in holding staff to account for students' performance. They have recently started a rigorous monitoring of the progress of current learners which indicates that a higher proportion of both apprentices and classroom-based

learners will successfully complete their qualification in 2015/16 than in 2014/15. However, this is taking place too late in the year to lead to interventions targeted on the weaker curriculum areas.

Senior leaders have taken effective actions to tackle the weaknesses in assessment identified at the latest inspection. These have included effective training for staff on how to comply with awarding body requirements. As a result, the college has received a higher proportion of positive reports from awarding bodies than in previous years. All but one curriculum area has gained full support from awarding bodies for the quality of assessment. This removes a time-consuming weakness that has affected students at the college for several years.

Senior leaders have plans for appointing staff to a new role of study coach. These staff will take responsibility for overseeing the progress and attendance of each individual student; this oversight was lacking at the time of the latest inspection. The role is designed for post-holders to work closely with teachers to ensure all staff are collaborating on how to work in the best interests of their learners.

Senior leaders have revised attendance and student conduct policies and produced a new student charter. These now set clear expectations for learners and staff. Students have been consulted on these revisions but little use is being made of their views to inform other improvements. Senior leaders have also produced a new lesson observation policy which has a strong focus on monitoring learners' progress. However, the aims of the policy are unclear and it lacks sufficient focus on how it is to be used to improve all teachers' ability to provide high-quality teaching.

Senior managers have identified and communicated the cultural changes that are necessary for the college to improve. They have involved staff positively in the changes they have made so far and prepared staff well for starting the new academic year successfully. Staff welcome the clarity of direction and the expectation of higher standards than existed at the time of the latest inspection. Staff are extremely complimentary about the new principal's commitment to spending time talking to students and staff, the high standards he sets for students and his recognition, through emails, telephone calls and greetings cards, of staff members' efforts, commitment and success.

Governors' effectiveness in improving provision and holding senior leaders to account for their actions following the latest inspection. **Reasonable progress**

Governors have successfully met their target of having a full senior leadership team in place. New appointments have been made to roles that are aligned to the improvements needed in the college. The senior roles complement each other and have clear lines of responsibility. New governors have been appointed with skills and experience that strengthen the board's focus on local employment and improving educational standards. More appointments to the board are scheduled within the next few months. Governors are fully aware of the need to appoint governors with sufficient educational expertise to challenge senior managers about the quality of all

aspects of the further education provision. These include aspects such as the influence of employers on the curriculum, which do not have clearly expressed performance measures.

Governors have developed an improvement plan which they are monitoring as part of the college's post-inspection action plan. They are receiving clearer reports about the college's performance and are improving their ability to scrutinise reports and to hold senior leaders to account for the quality of provision. At board meetings, governors are in the process of agreeing how they will monitor progress towards achieving the key performance indicators for 2016/17.

Governors have received external guidance on improving their collection of staff and learners' views. They are planning a link scheme with curriculum areas to provide more opportunities for contact with staff and learners but their improvement plan lacks timescales and clarity about the impact they expect from this scheme.

Learners' attendance at lessons.

Reasonable progress

The principal has led a concerted effort to reform staff and learners' approach to attendance. Learners are now better aware of the importance of attendance and staff are improving their skills in asserting the importance of good attendance and their strategies for securing this. As a result there has been a small improvement in attendance rate since the latest inspection. Learners' attendance is now tracked better at all levels, including by the board of governors. Staff identify which students need interventions and are more effective in providing appropriate support.

College leaders have developed an attendance policy which clearly sets out the high standards staff are to set for students. This is closely linked to the new student charter, code of conduct and disciplinary policy, all of which have been well received by staff since they provide clarity about the standards they should expect and the actions they should take to tackle any incidents of low attendance. Staff have been trained on their responsibilities for high attendance and the importance of this as a skill for employment.

The college is making a significant investment of time and money in the new role of study coach. At the previous inspection inspectors identified that learners' progress and attendance were not monitored closely enough and staff did not provide the challenge and support learners need to make better progress. The study coach role is well designed to provide the support and guidance students need to ensure they are making progress and are producing work of a high standard, as well as helping them to develop the behaviours and attitudes for progression.

The leadership of apprenticeship provision.

Reasonable progress

Managers are monitoring more closely the regularity and effectiveness of assessors' work with employers and apprentices. Their weekly reviews of apprentices' progress have successfully identified the actions needed to speed up apprentices' progress when necessary. They are placing a greater emphasis on involving the employer in

monitoring each apprentice's progress, which is leading to improvements in the support provided to apprentices. At the time of the monitoring visit, the college's data indicates that the proportion of apprentices who successfully complete their apprenticeship is on track to increase in 2015/16.

Managers have identified the key weaknesses in apprenticeships and have produced a prudent action plan detailing the steps they need to take. They have reviewed the range of apprenticeships offered and reduced this to remove poorer performing provision and to align the apprenticeships with local priorities for employment. Managers have reviewed the delivery of functional skills and have plans to ensure all functional skills are taught by English or mathematics specialists early in the apprentice's programme.

While managers are increasingly taking action to develop their staff's skills, some staff are not yet setting dates for the completion of apprenticeships that fully take into account the skills and requirements of the apprentice and employer. They are also not using information about the destinations of their apprentices to understand the impact of the apprenticeships on their careers.

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