City College Coventry

Re-inspection monitoring visit report

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Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

This is the second re-inspection monitoring visit to City College Coventry following publication of the inspection report on 31 December 2015. The college was inadequate overall at that inspection. The focus of this second visit, some 10 months after the first, is to judge, against the themes previously agreed, the progress leaders, governors and managers have made to improve the provision.

Themes

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

Senior leaders and governors have a clear understanding of the progress they have made in improving the quality of provision, although this is not fully evident from the post-inspection action plan. Leaders and managers have not fully resolved the priorities for improvement highlighted by inspectors in the first visit, to make this action plan a more efficient and effective tool to assist with the improvement of the provision.

A year after the inspection, the post-inspection action plan has now served its purpose. Leaders and managers recognise the need to produce from the self-assessment report, once it has been finalised, an action plan which will help them to review and re-establish the key priorities for development, so that they may continue to improve the provision. They should ensure that:

- there is a clear line of sight between the action plan and the performance summary
- the distinction between the completion of actions and the impact achieved is clear
- they identify the reports from the quality improvement cycle which provide the necessary source information to measure success and ensure appropriate triangulation and reliability of the range of evidence; they amend the timing of reports from the quality improvement cycle, where appropriate, to ensure robust triangulation of information.

Scrutiny by senior leaders and governors is appropriately rigorous. The impact of changes to the model of governance has been seen in improved opportunities for governors to support and challenge senior leaders. They have found the post-inspection action plan valuable and have confidence in the integrity, accuracy and reliability of the information and data they receive.

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

Reasonable progress

Precise pre-entry guidance and initial assessment have helped to ensure that learners start their time at the college on the right study programme according to their interests, aspirations and prior attainment. This is evident in the lower proportion of learners leaving the college than in the previous year, and in much lower levels of course transfers in the first six weeks of the autumn term.

Learners have much greater access to work-experience placements and work-related learning than was the case at the time of the previous inspection, although leaders and managers recognise that the quality of these is too variable across the college. They are working hard to measure the impact of this work experience using feedback from employers and learners alike. Leaders, managers and staff have done much valuable work to ensure that those learners who are not yet ready for a work-experience placement have access to work-related learning in college. This includes employers coming into college to help establish real-work environments and activities. However, observations undertaken during this monitoring visit indicate that learners' development of employability skills in learning sessions is not consistently strong. For example, teachers and learners are too often focused on the completion of tasks without sufficient recognition of the skills learners are developing and the application of these to the world of work.

Leaders and managers have taken appropriate steps to improve teaching, learning and assessment in English and mathematics in study programmes. The impact of this work is visible in learners' attendance and through the observation of learning taking place. Learners' attendance at English and mathematics lessons is improving, but is still too variable across the college. Leaders' and managers' observations of teaching and learning both in discrete English and mathematics lessons and in vocational lessons indicate an uneven picture. This shows that there is still much work to do to raise the quality of this provision to a consistently good standard, so that learners can make progress in their development of these skills according to their potential.

Learners' attendance

Reasonable progress

Leaders and managers acknowledge that learners' attendance in the current academic year to date is not high enough. Comparisons with equivalent data from the previous year are not valid due to the previously stated unreliability of the collection and reporting of this data in 2015/16. Data for the current year is much more accurate and reliable. The current target for attendance is achievable, but leaders and managers agree that it is not sufficiently ambitious or challenging.

Leaders, managers and staff are working hard to improve learners' attendance. Attendance is a key performance indicator in the college's 'MOT' (two-weekly evaluation) of course performance, which is due to become more formalised and systematic later this month. Leaders, managers and staff have communicated very clearly to learners the importance of attendance and punctuality as part of the 'CCC (City College Coventry) way', a set of expectations made of staff and learners alike. The scrutiny of individual learning plans indicates the high extent to which teachers focus on learners' attendance and punctuality. This is also evident through the observation of teaching, learning and assessment carried out during this monitoring visit and more generally, as demonstrated by observation records. The monitoring of attendance is leading to appropriate interventions to support and re-engage learners. This is partly demonstrated by the reduced proportion of learners withdrawing from their course and leaving the college compared to the previous year. The use of attendance data as one of a range of key performance indicators contributing to the appraisal of teachers is developing.

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

Although teachers have a greater awareness of the expectations set by their managers, compliance with these expectations is still too varied. As a result, too many teachers do not set targets that support learners to recognise their progress to date. The development of a college standard has been helpful to teachers in understanding the importance of fundamental teaching and learning strategies, but there is still too much variation in the quality of teaching and learning. For example, teachers do not consistently apply the expectations of setting clear learning objectives that are measurable for individual learners.

Following the revisions to the observation of teaching, learning and assessment process, leaders now more accurately identify key areas for improvement and use this information to plan rapidly and complete targeted staff development. Teachers have a greater confidence in their managers and senior leaders to support them to improve. This, among a number of other factors, is evidence of an important change in culture since the previous inspection. It is too early to judge the effectiveness of these development activities in improving teaching and learning. Managers are positive about their roles and responsibilities in improving teaching and learning and are confident that the planned development opportunities are having a beneficial impact of improving teachers' skills.

Managers are maintaining a strong focus on improving systems to monitor the progress of learners and the follow-up of actions. Teachers have a clear understanding of the expectations that are set by college leaders.

However, the quality of target setting and action planning is too variable and learners do not always know what skills they need to develop next in order to make effective progress. For example, too many targets for learners are around task completion, rather than the skills they need to develop to become more proficient.

Leaders have ensured that data is now more reliable and that information from quality-improvement activities, such as the observation of teaching, learning and assessment, now more accurately informs actions for those teachers who require support and training. Leaders and managers have completed a number of graded observations to date, based on a risk assessment of teachers' previous performance. College observers know the features of good teaching and learning and apply their knowledge well when carrying out their reviews of quality. During joint lesson observations, managers identified very similar strengths and areas for improvement to those identified by the inspector.

Leaders have not yet used a wide enough range of data and information to inform them clearly enough of how successfully learners make progress, or to have an accurate view of those learners who are at risk. Managers have not yet implemented the cycle of two-weekly evaluations (MOT) for the current academic year; managers have well-founded expectations that this process will result in a more accurate identification of learners at risk. At the time of this visit, sources of data used to inform risk assessment are not always consistently used. As a result, the quality of this information and the way that it is applied remain too variable.

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

Since the previous visit, leaders have developed a useful guide for teachers to enable them to understand the key principles behind effective teaching, learning and assessment. The 'CCC way' sets clear expectations for teachers and supports managers' actions to focus on the fundamental elements of effective teaching. In some lessons, teachers have started to apply these expectations well, but currently there is much work to do to ensure that teachers do this consistently well across the college. Teachers are not yet systematically using the electronic individual learning plans to record learners' targets and success to date. As a result, managers do not yet have a full and accurate picture of the impact of improvements.

Leaders and managers have instigated swiftly a responsive programme of targeted staff development linked to the outcomes of observations of teaching learning and assessment. Topics such as behaviour management and assessment for learning are being included. However, the practice of setting targets and monitoring progress is too variable. For example, learners' work is not consistently marked and annotated with useful feedback to enable learners to know what skills they need to develop next and how teachers will review their progress.

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