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Nav Chohan
Principal
ShIPLEY College
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Dear Mr Chohan

Short inspection of Shipley College

Following the short inspection on 2 and 3 November 2016, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The inspection was the first short inspection carried out since the provider was judged to be good in February 2013.

This provider continues to be good.

You, your senior managers and governors have worked successfully to develop a culture of high aspirations within the college. Staff work together effectively to analyse performance so that any potential issues can be identified as soon as possible and interventions put in place to address them before they become significant. You do not accept poor performance from staff in any area.

Learners achieve well on most courses, and there are only a small number of courses where achievement is not high. Overall, high achievement rates have been maintained over the last few years and, in a number of areas, have improved. The progress that learners make compared to their starting points has also improved and most now make good progress; there are only a few areas where learners' progress is not yet strong. The key remaining area for improvement is now learners' achievement of qualifications in English and mathematics, particularly achievement of GCSE grades A* to C.

You have continued to place a strong emphasis on developing the provision to meet the needs of learners, the local community and employers, using your effective partnerships to support this. You have increased the number of apprentices, building on areas of strength in the provision and in response to local demand. The construction of the Jonathan Silver Building, a specialised facility, has supported the expansion of provision for learners with high needs. All staff have worked together to introduce the study programme successfully. Adult provision is adapted continually to ensure that the most relevant programmes are available.

Staff provide a supportive but challenging culture for learners. Learners enjoy their studies, have good attitudes to learning and are keen to do well. They know how well they are doing in their studies and what they need to do to improve; they know that if they have any difficulties, staff will support them. Learners' English skills are developed well in vocational lessons, but mathematics skills less so. All aspects of learners' programmes are integrated effectively and linked to their next steps, right from the start of their course. Consequently, most learners achieve well and progress to higher levels of learning or employment.

You have made good progress since your last inspection in improving the college's performance. Strengths have been maintained such as the inclusive nature of the college, effective teaching and learning, and high achievement rates. You have addressed almost all of the recommendations and, in some cases, these aspects are now strengths such as the role of governors in effectively challenging senior leaders about learners' outcomes and teaching and learning. The only area not yet addressed successfully relates to the low achievements of learners in mathematics and English qualifications.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders, governors and managers have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and that action is taken to safeguard learners. All staff place a very strong focus on making sure that learners are safe and supported. Learners say that they feel safe in individual discussions and in feedback from surveys, and are very clear on what they would do if they had a concern. Learners' behaviour is very good in lessons, in college buildings and as they move through the village between buildings.

Safeguarding policies and procedures are detailed and appropriate. They are regularly updated, include aspects such as the 'Prevent' duty and any local concerns, and are very well-integrated, so that staff are clear on what to do in any given situation and act effectively to support learners. Safe recruitment processes are robust and all staff attend regular training activities on all aspects of safeguarding. Governors show a secure understanding of safeguarding and the central importance it has within the college.

Inspection findings

- Staff have a detailed understanding of learners' performance across all provision types and groups of learners. They know the areas where performance has dipped or is not at the expected high level. Action taken to improve weaker areas has improved outcomes for learners. These include increases in the progress that learners make compared to their starting points and in the number of apprentices who achieve their qualification within the planned timeframe.
- Achievement of high grades in GCSE English and mathematics was low in 2015/16 for adult learners and those learners aged 16 to 18, as was the achievement for the small number of learners studying level 2 functional skills

qualifications in mathematics. Achievement rates for functional skills at other levels and for English were much better. Attendance rates for English and mathematics classes, particularly adult classes, are not good enough.

- Leaders and managers have implemented several improvement strategies to improve English and mathematics provision, based on a detailed review and evaluation of previous outcomes. These include the recruitment of new specialist staff, the upskilling of existing staff and the sharing of best practice to ensure a consistent approach.
- Learners have a good attitude to their learning in English and mathematics lessons and generally participate well in the activities set, enabling them to consolidate previous learning and to develop new skills and knowledge. Learners who have previously not achieved well in mathematics are beginning to feel more confident. Teachers offer good levels of support and constructive feedback to improve learners' understanding. Learners are now making stronger progress in these subjects, but it is too early to see the full impact of all these changes on improving achievement rates.
- Learners develop their English skills well in vocational lessons. The development of mathematical skills in vocational lessons is less good and learners are not given enough opportunities to extend and reinforce these skills in their lessons.
- Staff have successfully implemented study programmes for 16- to 19-year-olds. All necessary requirements are met well, with a strong focus on learner progression and the development of employability skills and work-related learning. Learners are well-motivated and take responsibility for their own learning. Teachers provide a range of activities that interest learners. Teachers and learning support assistants work together productively to promote learning for those who need additional support.
- Teachers' plans for learners are individualised to support both learning and personal development. Learners are set a range of targets which link well with the detailed information they are given on how to improve. Teachers monitor learners' progress effectively; they give learners constructive feedback which promotes and reinforces learning well.
- Governors now have a comprehensive knowledge of the college and a greater involvement in college life, particularly with teaching, learning and assessment. They have improved their knowledge base by upskilling existing governors and appointing new governors who have an education background. They carry out learning walks with senior managers and are linked with heads of sector. Governors use the knowledge and skills gained from their training and increased involvement to ask highly pertinent questions at their meetings, providing more effective challenge for senior managers on these aspects of provision.
- The curriculum is closely aligned with local needs. Senior managers have responded well to employer demands in both college-based learning and apprenticeships; for example, they have expanded programmes in the retail sector to link with the development of a new shopping centre in Bradford. They have also responded well to the educational needs of the community, such as supporting the development of specialised language programmes. Courses meet the needs of learners very well as learners gain the skills they need for

employment or to progress to further learning successfully.

- Staff collect information regarding learners' progression and destinations rigorously, and have greatly increased the number of learners whose destination is known. In the previous year the destinations of almost half the adult learners who left were unknown. This year, the percentage of learners whose destination is unknown has already been reduced to less than 7%. Staff are using this information well to plan learner progression and put in place effective support to help learners move on to positive destinations.
- A high number of learners progress into higher levels of learning, within the college and externally, or gain employment. Many learners successfully complete level 3 programmes and progress to higher education. The percentage of apprentices who achieve sustained employment has increased markedly, with examples of apprentices achieving promotion or being given additional responsibilities at work.

Next steps for the provider

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- improvement strategies successfully address the very small number of courses where learners' achievement and progress are not yet at the same high level as the rest of the provision
- the college-wide focus on English and mathematics is fully implemented in all areas so that learners attend well and achieve their qualifications in these subjects, particularly grades A* to C in GCSE and level 2 functional skills in mathematics
- teachers provide more opportunities in vocational lessons for learners to develop their mathematical skills.

I am copying this letter to the Skills Funding Agency and the Education Funding Agency. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Heather Barnett
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, inspectors were assisted by the vice principal curriculum, as nominee. We met with you and your senior managers, a number of governors including the chair, heads of sector and teachers. Inspectors observed teaching,

learning and assessment and reviewed learners' written work. We spoke to learners in lessons and around the campus, and apprentices in the workplace. We also considered the views of learners, parents and carers by reviewing the comments received on Ofsted's online questionnaires. Inspectors reviewed key college documents, including those relating to self-assessment, learner and apprentice achievement and progress, learner and apprentice assessment and safeguarding.