

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



Ms Yvonne Kelly
Principal and Chief Executive
Barking and Dagenham College
Dagenham Road
Rush Green
Essex
RM7 0XU

Dear Ms Kelly

Short inspection of Barking and Dagenham College

Following the short inspection on 23 and 24 May 2017, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the college was judged to be good in April 2013.

This provider continues to be good.

Leaders' and managers' highly effective promotion of change and improvement continues apace, placing learners, and improving the quality of provision, at the heart of the college's work.

Your learners continue to receive good-quality education and training. Many make good progress on their courses; they achieve well, and their progression to employment and further and higher education is good. Learners develop good skills in their vocational areas and also for their wider employment. Their learning takes place in very good quality accommodation, with good resources.

Learners very much enjoy their studies and feel safe in college and in their work-related activities. They respond positively to the good support your staff provide to help them to develop their personal and career aspirations; their behaviour is good, both with their peers and staff.

The areas for improvement, specifically noted at the previous inspection, are clearly evident as key aspects of the college's improvement plans and of your work on the ground to further improve. You have paid successful attention to improving standards of teaching, learning and assessment, although they are not yet outstanding, and this is reflected in the steady improvement of learners' achievements, although less significantly so for GCSE mathematics and English and for apprentices.

As at the previous inspection, learners' achievements are good for the large majority of classroom-based provision. However, the significantly increased number of learners on GCSE English and mathematics courses do not achieve sufficient grades A*–C, especially those aged 16 to 18. Apprentices' achievement of their frameworks has been too low, both for overall and timely success. Improved management of the provision is leading to better success, but with more work still to do.

Teaching, learning and assessment are good across the large majority of lessons, but too little is outstanding. Teachers often plan, and skilfully use, learning activities which gain learners' interests very well and stimulate their learning. As a result, most learners make good progress in lessons and develop their skills well.

In a small minority of lessons, teachers insufficiently assess learning and progress and the challenge for all learners is not maximised. In these lessons, teachers do not provide learners with the opportunity to develop deeper thinking skills or to solve problems within a wider vocational context, and most-able learners do not achieve their full potential.

Teachers often use their subject and occupational knowledge well to provide effective coaching and feedback, supporting learners to develop the practical and technical skills they need for work and to improve their grades. Apprentices often benefit from good theory teaching which links well to their practical studies and workplace jobs, and they are able to practise and apply the skills at work.

The large majority of learners and apprentices also make effective progress in developing the personal and social skills that they need for work. They improve their work-related skills through the college's good range of enrichment activities and the excellent work-related and work-experience activities, offered in close partnership with employers.

The improved work by teachers to develop learners' skills in English and mathematics is not yet fully reflected in learners' achievements. In a large proportion of lessons, learners effectively develop their communication skills through activities which challenge them to listen and speak more clearly and confidently, and there is good development of vocationally related mathematics skills in many lessons. However, teachers' correction of learners' written English is too often insufficiently rigorous and learners are not helped to develop their written skills to higher levels.

In contrast to the previous inspection, teachers now skilfully integrate themes of equality and diversity into their lessons.

As you recognise in your own plans for improvement, learners' attendance rates are not yet high enough, especially in lessons for English and mathematics. Their retention on courses is very high and they are usually punctual to lessons.

Study programmes for learners aged 16 to 19 are well managed and meet all requirements for these programmes, including learners taking part in suitable work-experience or work-related activity, and study for English and mathematics.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have ensured that safeguarding arrangements continue to be highly effective, both for learners and apprentices. Since the previous inspection, your well-informed and proactive managers have ensured that safeguarding arrangements keep pace with the various changes to safeguarding, including requirements of the 'Prevent' duty.

The college is represented on the local safeguarding board and fully participates in its training and updating programme. It also has strong links with local support agencies, including the police, the Prevent team, social care and healthcare services and third-sector agencies.

Obligations under the 'Prevent' duty are well met. Staff and learners have been appropriately introduced to the areas that they need to know about, including the risks of extremism and radicalisation. For example, in their tutorials, learners readily show their understanding of 'Prevent' by describing its relevance to aspects of their lives in their local communities.

As a key priority for continuing your work and improvements during 2017, you identify the need to further consolidate learners' understanding of British values and 'Prevent'.

Inspection findings

- The leadership and management of the college are good. Since the previous inspection, leaders and managers have maintained the impetus for improvement, successfully promoting an aspirational culture with high standards. You have high expectations of your staff, learners and apprentices, with no excuses accepted for poorer performance.
- Leaders and managers make sure that learners, apprentices and customers are at the centre of the college's work. They have continued to ensure that learners and apprentices benefit from innovative approaches to improving teaching, learning and assessment, including the many successful work- and employment-related opportunities jointly promoted with your commercial partners.
- Leaders' and managers' work with partners, including many local, national and international employers, is highly successful in furthering your mission to provide high-quality and responsive training for work, and to maximise the contribution of the college to local communities.
- Leaders, managers and governors have a realistic view of the college's performance. They are ambitious, but not complacent, and are well aware of what needs to be improved to further move the college towards outstanding. The corporation provides good challenge and support to leaders and managers.

- Outcomes for learners are good overall, with learners often achieving well and with steady improvement year on year. Learners' progression to employment and to further or higher education is good.
- Learners' achievement of grades A*–C in GCSE mathematics and English, while improving slightly, is too low and requires improvement. Apprentices' successful achievement of their frameworks, especially within agreed timescales, is too low, but beginning to improve.
- In a small minority of lessons, teachers do not successfully challenge all learners to do their best, especially for the most able, failing to adequately assess learners' progress and understanding from lesson to lesson, hindering their progress and achievement.
- Learners' retention on courses is very high and their attendance is improving, although it is not yet at the college's target overall. This is largely because learners' attendance to their lessons in mathematics and English is too often low.

Next steps for the provider

In pursuit of their aim to become an outstanding provider, governors, leaders and managers should ensure that:

- teaching and learning are consistently good or better, with much that is outstanding, paying particular attention to securing all teachers' systematic assessment of their learners' progress, with consistently high levels of challenge in lessons
- by building on the good practice that you have, learners' attendance is consistently good, especially in lessons for mathematics and English, and that all learners understand how important good attendance is to make the best progress
- learners' achievement improves further and is consistently high, also paying particular attention to improving learners' high grades for GCSE mathematics and English, and to apprentices' overall and timely success.

Yours sincerely

David Martin

Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, inspectors were assisted by the interim chief operating officer, as nominee. We met with you and your management team, teachers, learners and governors. Inspectors observed teaching, learning and assessment, and reviewed learners' work. We reviewed key policies and documents, including those relating to self-assessment, performance and safeguarding. We also considered the views of learners and employers.