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19 June 2018

Ms Amanda Burnside
Principal
Wiltshire College
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Dear Ms Burnside

Short inspection of Wiltshire College

Following the short inspection on 23 and 24 May 2018, 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 June 2015.

This provider continues to be good.

You and your staff have carried out the seven recommendations made at your previous inspection effectively. You have integrated the actions for improvement adeptly with your self-assessment process and quality improvement plan. Consequently, your students are benefiting from effective teaching and support which have sustained good personal and academic outcomes over time.

Your processes for improving the quality of teaching through staff development, performance management and self-assessment are thorough, well planned and effective. Your self-assessment report provides an accurate insight into the quality of education provided at the college. It also highlights very helpful information about the progress and improvements made since the last inspection.

You have reviewed your strategic plan, curriculum and partnerships with local partners and employers, with careful attention to the economic and social needs of the area. The outcome has resulted in more opportunities for potential students to enter further education and progress to higher education courses locally. Your work with employers, businesses and the armed forces has led to good apprenticeship opportunities and employment routes for your students.

Your college observers and inspectors together used a range of first-hand evidence to assess the quality of teaching and learning over time. They agreed that teachers typically engage students well through effective planning and thoughtful activities. They have high expectations of students, who benefit from teachers' strong

technical knowledge and vocational expertise.

Teachers' careful monitoring of the progress of students motivates students, who work enthusiastically towards achieving their goals. Teachers assess work carefully, in line with the college's assessment approach, explaining how they have met standards. Students receive marked work promptly and this spurs them on. Regular encouraging feedback from teachers boosts students' confidence when they are told they have produced work of a good standard.

Students explained how they develop new skills relevant to their courses quickly and safely through observing good practical demonstrations by teachers. In painting and decorating lessons and in animal care, for example, students understand the importance of preparing themselves and the equipment thoroughly before starting their tasks.

Students' attendance has improved since the last inspection and is continuing to improve, although it is not yet at the college's target. Rigorous reporting, recording and follow-up by teachers are contributing to improving students' attendance and punctuality. The introduction of recognising and rewarding good attendance and the use of the 'late card' system are also having a positive impact.

Students across all the campuses work together respectfully, are polite and behave courteously. You and your staff have created a welcoming family atmosphere. This was exemplified during the inspection by the organisation and care taken to make sure that all students settled in and were prepared for their GCSE examinations.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding procedures and practices are comprehensive and thorough. Students feel safe at college. They know how to recognise and report safeguarding concerns and where to get help if they need it. They were very enthusiastic about the introduction of different coloured lanyards to distinguish categories of visitors and staff as a safety measure.

Students and staff are highly supportive of the college's excellent arrangements to care for the physical and mental well-being of students. Staff receive regular training and updating about safeguarding and government priorities to tackle domestic abuse, trafficking of people and drug dealing. Teachers, staff and students carefully adhere to health and safety rules.

Students are aware of how to report concerns about extremist behaviour and staff have been trained in the 'Prevent' duty. The 'Prevent' duty action plan is well considered and thorough.

The procedures for safe recruitment are robust and sound. However, at the time of the inspection, inspectors noted inconsistencies in recording information. Leaders immediately took steps to correct this oversight, demonstrating their rigorous and prompt action in safeguarding when matters are brought to their attention.

Inspection findings

- My first line of enquiry was to look at whether the college's self-evaluation of 'good' for outcomes was justified and based on sound practices to sustain the improvements.
- Since the last inspection, overall achievement rates have increased. Achievement of students on level 3 courses improved, although these are just below national rates. However, the college's decision to adopt technical qualifications resulted in students on two large programmes not gaining passes due to the change in assessment. Leaders and managers have taken appropriate action to prepare teachers and students for the new assessment methods.
- Pass rates of students taking English and mathematics GCSE and functional skills qualifications have increased and are above national rates. The achievement of adult students and apprentices has remained high. However, not enough apprentices gain their qualifications within the planned timescales.
- Effective processes are in place to support students and help them to gain their qualifications. Leaders and managers act quickly to identify and remedy areas of poor performance.
- My second line of enquiry was to assess how effectively managers monitor the work and impact of subcontractors.
- Leaders and managers monitor the work of subcontractors closely and diligently. Effective arrangements to manage the partners with whom they subcontract, and to make sure that students receive the help and support that they need, are in place. Achievements of students with all the subcontracted partners are consistently high.
- College managers observe subcontractors' tutors working with students regularly and give them constructive feedback on how to improve their teaching. They also undertake joint training, such as improving the use of technology in learning. However, managers have not applied the same rigour in arrangements with one subcontracted partner, whose students also achieve very well.
- My third line of enquiry was to review the effectiveness of careers advice and guidance.
- Students receive highly appropriate and helpful advice and guidance before they start their courses and during their courses. The advice extends to pupils aged between 14 and 16 and students with high needs with education, health and care plans. These students have clear individual targets that help them to develop suitable vocational knowledge and to make progress in developing good basic and employment skills.
- The guidance for students in their tutorial programme complements the very good resources and extensive careers service for all students. They also benefit from access to well-established links with external agencies and specialist impartial advice.
- The vast majority of students are highly positive about the quality of advice and

guidance they receive. Nearly all students interviewed at inspection were clear about their next steps.

- My fourth line of enquiry was to look at actions managers and teachers take to improve pass rates for English and mathematics and to ensure that students continue to improve their numeracy and literacy skills.
- The concerted efforts of leaders, managers and teachers to integrate English and mathematics across the curriculum have been successful. A new management structure for oversight of English and mathematics, put in place in 2016, has resulted in teachers adopting a consistent approach across the whole college. Consequently, students understand the importance of a good command of English and mathematics for their futures.
- Actions taken to improve the teaching, learning and assessment of English and mathematics, such as continuous staff training, have been effective. Students are carefully assessed at the start of their courses and receive clear targets to motivate them. They benefit from informative booklets, ongoing access to individual help and feedback, revision classes and guidance on examination techniques.
- Pass rates at high grades in English and mathematics GCSE have continued to rise and exceed the college's target.
- My next line of enquiry was to look at the progress the college has made in collecting information on students' destinations and providing suitable progression opportunities for students.
- The college system for finding out students' actual destinations has been highly successful. Managers know about almost all students' destinations. They make good use of this information when reviewing the effectiveness of courses and for preparing students for progression to further study, higher education, employment or apprenticeships.
- Students build up their own curriculum vitae when they start their courses. They continue the process through the academic year. In this way, they demonstrate the progress they make from the start of their course through to the end, helping them to make decisions about their own progression.
- My final line of enquiry was to look at the effectiveness of governors in holding leaders and managers to account in improving the experience and achievements of learners.
- Governors monitor the performance of the college closely and pay particular attention to the performance and experience of students. They are very aware of the strengths of the college and areas for improvement. They scrutinise and question judgements knowledgeably during the self-assessment process. They take a full and active role in assessing the quality of courses at the quality review boards.
- Governors are very knowledgeable about safeguarding, especially the 'Prevent' duty, and are keenly committed to the college, contributing fully to building the economic and social capacity for the community. For example, they support and encourage the work undertaken with service families on their return from service

abroad.

- Governors demonstrate that they are fully committed to the mission and ethos of the college by undertaking their link activities with staff and students with enthusiasm. They contribute positively to ensuring that revised arrangements for governance are effective in holding leaders and senior managers to account.

Next steps for the provider

Senior leaders and managers should ensure that:

- they continue to improve the pass rates of students, particularly at level 3, and the rate of progress they make during their courses, and that apprentices gain their qualifications within the planned timescales
- teachers and students are fully and adequately prepared for changes in qualifications related to how students are assessed at the end of their courses
- they monitor the work of all partners with equal rigour.

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

Yours sincerely

Peter Green
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

Further Education and Skills (FES) inspectors conducted an aligned inspection of Wiltshire College with social care inspectors. Social care inspectors conducted a routine inspection of the residential provision at the college. Some joint meetings between FES, social care inspectors, leaders and managers were conducted in relation to safeguarding and aspects of leadership and management. During the FES inspection, one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four Ofsted Inspectors were assisted by the vice-principal as nominee. We met with you, governors, senior managers, teachers and students. We observed teaching and learning, and some observations were conducted jointly with your observers. We scrutinised key strategic and policy documents, including those relating to self-assessment, quality assurance, safeguarding and the college's performance. We analysed information on students' achievements. We also analysed feedback from students and apprentices gathered during the inspection.