

# City College Nottingham

Report following a monitoring visit to a 'requires improvement' provider

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**Unique reference number:** 1236708

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**Type of provider:** Independent specialist college

**Address:** Carlton Road  
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## Monitoring visit: main findings

### Context and focus of visit

City College Nottingham was inspected in November 2017. At that time, inspectors judged the overall effectiveness of the provision to require improvement.

The focus of this monitoring visit was to evaluate the progress that leaders and managers have made in addressing the main areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection.

City College Nottingham was established in 1993 and operates from venues in Nottingham, Derby, Leicester and Stoke-on-Trent. It provides 16 to 19 study programmes and apprenticeships through subcontracting arrangements with a number of colleges. In addition, it holds direct contracts for the provision of adult learning programmes. City College Nottingham offers a range of programmes that include childcare, health and social care, construction, electrical installation, information and communication technology (ICT), beauty therapy, fashion and textiles, professional cookery, business studies and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL). In January 2018, the college became a provider of intermediate and advanced apprenticeships.

### Themes

#### **What progress has the provider made in implementing quality assurance and improvement processes that deliver high standards for learners?**

#### **Reasonable progress**

Leaders and managers have implemented appropriate arrangements to evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. They make good use of suitably rigorous internal audit processes to identify and address successfully areas for improvement. An adequate number of trained observers now evaluate the quality of taught sessions through direct observation. The outcomes of the process usually lead to suitably detailed and monitored action plans that improve standards. Tutors are subject to effective performance monitoring and review where managers identify weak performance. Managers have started to improve the sharing of good practice. For example, they are beginning the use of peer observation so that tutors can experience professional practice of a high standard. However, this and the comprehensive use of direct observation to improve teaching, learning and assessment are relatively new. Consequently, it is too soon to judge their effectiveness in raising the quality of taught sessions for all learners.

The self-assessment process uses a suitable range and variety of stakeholders' views and data to inform judgement formulation. The brief allied report makes adequate reference to the experience of learners. However, it gives too little attention to an assessment of learners' personal and social development. Managers regularly review

the associated quality improvement plan and have made adequate progress in achieving stated actions. They have yet to set and exploit enough measurable targets to aid fully the plan's implementation. The college's management information systems do not capture the progression to higher level courses and destinations of all learners who achieve. This limits managers' ability to evaluate and improve current quality assurance procedures.

**What progress has the provider made in improving learners' attendance and punctuality? Reasonable progress**

Since the previous inspection, leaders and managers have improved attendance monitoring arrangements. All staff have received useful training to ensure that they have a good awareness of how to deal with learners who do not attend regularly. Learners who fail to attend planned sessions receive rapid follow-up by the college. This includes a relevant escalation process for further action where learners' attendance is deemed unacceptable.

Tutors and managers know their learners well. They have a good appreciation of the barriers to learners' participation and the causes of individuals' erratic session attendance patterns. Welfare staff work closely with tutors to successfully re-engage individuals back into learning. Learners' attendance has generally improved since the previous inspection, although managers acknowledge it is not consistently high enough across the provision.

**What progress has the provider made in ensuring learners receive prompt and high-quality careers information, advice and guidance? Reasonable progress**

Leaders and managers have appropriately prioritised improvements to careers information, advice and guidance processes and procedures that benefit all learners. Since the previous inspection, the ability of staff to provide effective help has improved. Sufficient staff are now professionally qualified and competent to support learners to make informed choices about their futures. Learners receive suitably independent help at the beginning and throughout their time on programme. Recording of the outcomes of guidance sessions is usually adequate. However, in a minority of cases action plans do not include sufficient detail. This limits how well learners can plan and accomplish agreed actions within agreed timescales.

Managers are aware of the widely recognised external benchmarks for the development of effective careers information, advice and guidance. They appreciate fully their importance in improving the quality of learners' support. The benchmarks, and other quality indicators, are not yet part of formal review processes to improve the standard of service learners receive. Managers acknowledge that not enough study programme learners take part in work-related activities to inform their awareness of available career options.

**What progress has the provider made in ensuring tutors plan and deliver lessons that meet learners' needs, including raising their English and mathematics skills? Reasonable progress**

Tutors plan classroom sessions to ensure that the large majority of learners develop a secure knowledge and understanding of topics. Most tutors check learners' understanding routinely through effective questioning and assessment methods such as presentations and case studies. As a result, learners become confident in their knowledge and skills. They are prepared well for future tests and examinations. In a few cases, tutors do not check sufficiently whether learners have grasped key concepts or terminology.

Learners usually participate in well-planned activities that challenge them to develop at a suitably rapid pace. This is particularly the case where learners need to develop practical skills. For example, learners studying beauty programmes quickly become adept at mastering massage techniques and treatments including tapotement, wringing, hot stones and Indian head massage. Brickwork learners develop good trowel skills. They make rapid progress in applying their learning to build complex architectural brickwork designs.

In a few cases, tutors do not ensure that learning activities link sufficiently well to the programme's planned aims. This distracts learners from developing fundamental knowledge on which they can build further. For example, learners undertake quizzes that occupy significant amounts of time but are not clearly related to the programme's goals.

Learners receive an appropriate assessment of their English and mathematics skills' development needs before beginning their programme. Tutors usually make effective use of this information to plan activities that close the gaps that learners have in these skills. Tutors generally develop learners' English and mathematics skills further, so they apply them to a range of scenarios. For example, business studies learners use their newly acquired skills to accurately calculate business and finance costings.

Tutors provide learners with appropriate feedback that helps them improve their work. Learners effectively use this feedback and, where set, the targets they receive highlight the skills and knowledge they need to succeed further. However, a small minority of tutors do not give enough feedback to help more able learners achieve their full potential. This is particularly the case in sessions where tutors spend a significant amount of time supporting least able learners.

Most teaching resources are adequate to support learning. However, ICT learners' development is hindered as they do not have routine access to the most current features of relevant operating systems and software. Additionally, a minority of learners do not have ready access to books and other resources held in the learning resource centre.

**What progress has the provider made in enhancing tutors' appreciation of British values, and the dangers of radicalisation and extremism, so they effectively promote learners' understanding of these topics?**

**Reasonable progress**

Tutors have undertaken relevant training to raise their awareness of fundamental British values and their 'Prevent' agenda duty. Most tutors effectively plan activities to develop learners' understanding of how to protect themselves and stay safe. Learners generally have an adequate or better understanding of these topics. This contributes to the collaborative and respectful culture in which learning takes place. For example, in one lesson learners presented information about their cultural heritage provoking questions about lifestyle and customs from their peers. Learners talked freely about the benefit of the rule of law, democracy and freedom of speech. This contributed effectively to increasing learners' awareness of different groups who live in Britain. In another session, business studies learners explored the process of radicalisation leading to extremist behaviour in a wide variety of settings. Learners skilfully linked the theme to whether businesses should actively promote the 'Prevent' duty as part of corporate social responsibility. This successfully deepened their understanding of both topics.

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