

The Maltings College

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

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Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

The Maltings College was inspected in March 2018. 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.

The provider is part of the Trinity Multi-Academy Trust. Since the previous inspection, the 29 remaining learners in the second year of level 3 study programmes have moved into accommodation in the sixth form centre at Trinity Academy Halifax.

Themes

What steps have leaders and managers taken to ensure the sustainability of provision, and what impact have these steps had? Reasonable progress

Senior leaders at the multi-academy trust undertook extensive analysis of the demand for provision at the college's original site and made strenuous attempts to increase enrolment. Nonetheless, applications for the current academic year decreased. In consultation with the regional schools commissioner and the local authority, senior leaders concluded that there is little prospect of increasing learner numbers at the original location. Leaders therefore decided to move the college to a more suitable location. The college is temporarily housed in the sixth form centre at the trust's main school, Trinity Academy Halifax. From September 2019, it will move into new, accessible accommodation in the centre of Halifax, to ensure sustainable provision. Senior leaders have worked closely with external partners, including the regional schools commissioner, local schools and colleges, and the local authority to coordinate the development of a new, central post-16 centre that meets local needs. The new centre will have a predominantly academic curriculum.

Staff have successfully minimised the disruption to the education or prospects of current and recent learners. Most learners who were midway through their study programmes at the time of the relocation continued their studies at Trinity Academy Halifax, where many had studied at key stage 4, or on appropriate courses at other local providers. Others have progressed to employment and apprenticeships.

Leaders, managers and the local authority ensured that learners received appropriate support during the transitional period. The move has had a demonstrably positive impact on current learners, whose attendance, progress and achievement have improved. Leaders are right to recognise that they need to continue to offer effective

support and advice to the very small minority of learners who have not yet progressed to positive next steps in their education or employment.

Governors, leaders and managers have provided effective strategic oversight during this period of change. The trust has stringently maintained separate governance oversight of The Maltings College to ensure the proper promotion of the interests of remaining learners. College governors have closely scrutinised the impact of transition on current learners' academic, emotional and social progress. They have provided extensive support and challenge to leaders and managers to ensure that current learners benefit from the significant changes in their circumstances. Learners have, as a result, settled very well in their new accommodation. They have integrated well with other sixth-form students and they benefit from the wider pastoral and academic support now available to them.

Have leaders and managers improved the quality of teaching, learning and assessment? Do teachers deliver effective theory lessons and provide helpful feedback to improve learners' skills and knowledge? Reasonable progress

Leaders and managers accurately identify strengths and areas for improvement in teaching, learning and assessment, through their robust quality assurance procedures. These include work scrutiny and observations of teaching, learning and assessment. They provide a broad range of effective professional development opportunities to address areas for improvement, and help teachers to improve their subject knowledge and professional practice. Teachers benefit from the extensive support available in Trinity Academy Halifax. For example, they link with experienced teachers who provide subject-specialist curriculum support, resources and interventions. These were less accessible at the college's original site. A few staff take part in research projects that improve the impact of their teaching and facilitate the sharing of good practice. As a result, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment has improved.

Teachers provide helpful feedback that ensures that learners know what to do to improve their work. Learners take pride in their work and redraft it in response to the feedback that they receive. For example, in health and social care teachers encourage learners to undertake further research and add more detail to their essays on safeguarding. Learners respond by incorporating more information about accessing support from safeguarding agencies and resubmit their improved work. The large majority are becoming increasingly confident and ambitious and have responded positively to the academic rigour of their level 3 courses.

Teachers use their good subject knowledge well to plan and deliver high-quality lessons. These ensure that learners gain the theoretical knowledge that they need to pass their examinations and progress to further study at a higher level or to relevant employment. For example, in health and social care learners gain useful knowledge of the principles and implementation of legislation in social care settings. This

prepares them well for their next steps in education and employment in the health and social care sectors.

Since the college moved to its present site, leaders' and managers' actions to address a culture that did not routinely encourage learners to fulfil their academic potential have been largely successful. However, in a small minority of cases teachers' expectations of what learners can achieve remain too low. For example, in a small minority of subjects, teachers do not effectively encourage learners to develop their independent study skills from a very low base.

What progress do learners make in mathematics and English? Do they develop their skills well and achieve their qualifications in these subjects? Significant progress

Since the previous inspection, experienced staff from Trinity Academy Halifax and the wider trust, including the West Yorkshire Maths Hub, have strengthened their oversight of, and support for, mathematics and English. Consequently, current learners make very good progress from their starting points in these subjects. A high proportion of learners who have taken examinations in these subjects in the current academic year have achieved good grades.

Teachers of vocational subjects work well with mathematics and English specialist staff to develop effective ways of integrating teaching, learning and assessment of mathematics and English throughout the curriculum. For example, vocational teachers now 'pre-teach' key, subject-specific vocabulary to help learners to access the curriculum and master the academic language that unlocks further learning. All teachers now take part in the college's 'red pen warriors' initiative. This encourages the correction of errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar in lessons as learners are working. Learners quickly increase their vocabulary and their ability to use a high standard of English as a result of these high expectations.

Learners use their rapidly developing knowledge of mathematics and English to develop the useful skills that they need for further study at a higher level and future employment. For example, business students apply their mathematical knowledge to underpin their skills of cash flow forecasting and financial management. Childcare learners apply their knowledge of literacy well to analyse the potential literacy needs of the children with whom they will work. The majority of current learners in childcare and health and social care use academic conventions, such as Harvard referencing, well in their written work.

Have achievement rates improved? Reasonable progress

The large majority of current learners make very good progress from their starting points. Almost all meet or exceed their challenging targets. In most cases, they complete their assessments successfully and achieve good grades. Leaders and managers have ensured that previous gaps in the progress and achievement of male and female learners have closed in the current academic year. However, learners on

business courses make less effective progress, due to their uniformly poor performance on a research-based unit.

The large majority of students on level 1 study programmes achieved their qualifications in 2018. Although the proportion of learners on level 3 study programmes who achieved their qualifications decreased in 2018, it remains above the rate at similar providers. However, too few learners on level 2 study programmes, who formed the largest proportion of learners last year, achieved their qualifications. The college no longer offers level 2 programmes.

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