

# Bishop Auckland College

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

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**Unique reference number:** 130657

**Name of lead inspector:** Sarah Stabler, HMI

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**Type of provider:** General further education college

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## Monitoring visit: main findings

### Context and focus of visit

Bishop Auckland College was inspected in November and December 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.

At the time of the monitoring visit, there were 600 learners on education programmes for young people, including 45 learners who have high needs. Most learners study vocational programmes; the largest curriculum area is early years, followed by visual arts, hair and beauty, and sport. There were 154 apprentices on programme, the large majority following framework apprenticeships at level 2 or 3. The monitoring visit did not cover adult learning programmes as they were graded good at the previous inspection.

### Themes

#### **How well do leaders and managers improve the quality of teachers' practice? Reasonable progress**

Leaders and managers have successfully improved their approach to performance management. They carefully identify the staff who need to improve their practice and receive effective guidance from human resources colleagues to manage performance. As a result, staff improve their practice or leave the organisation.

Teaching, learning and assessment mentors conduct effective one-to-one coaching sessions with staff to address areas for improvement. The large majority of managers link departmental training well to the whole-college continuing professional development programme. As a result, staff have been supported well to improve their practice in areas such as providing effective feedback and the use of questioning to test learners' understanding.

Leaders and managers formally schedule time for staff to develop their subject expertise. Tutors benefit from attendance at vocational conferences and awarding body events which enables them to network with colleagues from other organisations and share good practice. For example, English and mathematics staff collaborate weekly with colleagues and share expertise on lesson planning.

Leaders and managers source expert advice for mathematics staff to help improve the content of courses. They partner with neighbouring colleges to develop the approach to teaching GCSE mathematics. Tutors use this learning and their own analysis of learner success to sequence the delivery of topics appropriately. For

example, they focus on number and measure early in the course to ensure that learners develop the fundamental knowledge that they need to carry out more advanced mathematical functions in readiness for the examination.

Managers carry out observations to evaluate the quality of teachers' practice. However, feedback from a small minority of observations is not precise enough to help staff identify what they need to do to enhance their practice and improve the development of learners' knowledge and skills.

**How well do teachers in education programmes for young people use learners' starting points to plan and implement a curriculum that supports learners to develop and apply new knowledge and skills? Reasonable progress**

Managers and tutors plan effective programmes to meet the needs of learners who have had previous poor experience of education or have significant barriers to learning. They carefully assess the knowledge, skills and behaviours that learners arrive with. They then use the results of the assessment to plan a programme of study with additional activities and pastoral support to meet learners' needs successfully.

Tutors use their vocational expertise well to plan and sequence programmes. They ensure that underpinning knowledge is delivered early in the programme so that learners can build on what they know and can do. Tutors skilfully use recall activities to reinforce learning. They plan and deliver training activities that allow learners to apply their practical skills and reflect on knowledge gained from theory lessons. For example, in level 3 sport programmes, learners study health and safety first to enable them to risk assess activities that they conduct in coaching sessions.

Most tutors make effective use of assessment to identify gaps in learners' knowledge. Tutors provide detailed explanations of what learners have done well and what they need to do to address gaps in their knowledge. As a result, learners understand their own areas for development and what they need to do to improve.

Managers and tutors have redesigned the content of the English and mathematics curriculum to take full account of learners' starting points. For example, in mathematics, tutors successfully identify gaps in learners' number skills. They have also introduced a qualification that helps learners to gain knowledge that improves their success with the early modules of GCSE programmes. However, tutors do not focus sufficiently on the continuing development of English and mathematics skills for learners who already have qualifications in these subjects.

Tutors do not assess well enough the progress that learners make from their starting points. They gather information about what learners know and can do but do not use this information effectively enough to plan activities to ensure that all learners are challenged to reach their full potential.

**What has been the impact of leaders' and managers' actions to improve the progress that apprentices make from their starting points to ensure that they achieve their learning goals and complete their programme on time?**

**Reasonable progress**

Leaders and managers work successfully with employers to identify elements of the qualification that best suit apprentices' job roles. Apprentices develop their skills through well-coordinated on- and off-the-job training activities. Employers value the positive contribution that apprentices make to their business. For example, apprentices develop their confidence and skills in presenting and apply their skills effectively when conducting educational talks with customers at a local visitor attraction.

Leaders and managers accurately identify apprentices who may need additional support. They ensure that tutors work well with workplace supervisors to address concerns with apprentices who fall behind. Staff carry out effective review meetings early in the programme with apprentices and employers to check the suitability of the programme. Tutors successfully involve employers in assessment activities and regular progress reviews to keep them apprised of apprentices' progress.

Tutors carefully assess apprentices' understanding of vocational terminology through the use of knowledge-based assignments. They provide helpful feedback to apprentices that identifies gaps in their knowledge and what they need to do to improve. As a result, business and administration apprentices successfully develop their knowledge and understanding of business policy, procedure and practice.

Tutors encourage apprentices to improve their English, mathematics and information, communication and technology skills. They clearly identify where apprentices need to use their knowledge and skills in the workplace. For example, apprentices use their mathematics skills to calculate the cost of errors when quality assuring colleagues' work.

Apprentices, many of whom are on frameworks, are not provided with specific feedback or learning goals other than those relating to the knowledge elements of the programme. Managers and tutors have recently evaluated and amended their approach to progress reviews and apprentice feedback to address this omission. However, it is too soon to measure the impact of their actions.

Leaders and managers collect anecdotal information about the progress that apprentices make in work after they complete their apprenticeship. However, this information is not drawn together well enough to enable managers to determine the appropriateness of the curriculum or measure the full impact of their programmes.

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