

Richard Taunton College

Re-inspection monitoring visit report

Unique reference number: 145228

Name of lead inspector: Bob Cowdrey, Her Majesty's Inspector

Inspection date(s): 27 February 2020

Type of provider: Sixth form college

Address: Hill Lane
Southampton
SO15 5RL

Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

Richard Taunton College was inspected in January 2019. 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.

Richard Taunton College is a small sixth-form college in the north-west of Southampton. The college provides a wide range of post-16 academic and vocational courses from level 1 to level 3. Over four fifths of the college's students come from Southampton, with just over half of these from areas of the city with higher than average levels of deprivation. Most students are aged 16 to 18 and enrolled on to full-time education programmes for young people with the vast majority studying at level 3.

Themes

What progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that teachers deliver interesting and challenging lessons, set students ambitious targets, monitor their progress and take swift action to help them to achieve their potential?

Reasonable progress

Since the previous inspection, staff have improved the quality of education. Leaders have introduced changes to the management of the curriculum that have led to improvements in teaching practice and, consequently, students' achievements. Teachers sequence the curriculum well and challenge students appropriately to improve their work and make progress. Students develop their knowledge and understanding of basic concepts and move on to more complex topics quickly.

Leaders and managers place a strong emphasis on increasing students' memory retrieval. For example, teachers use weekly quizzes to reinforce students' recall of knowledge over time. Students interviewed showed a high level of understanding of topics and sustained learning.

Managers have established a successful staff development programme for teachers and support staff. As a result, topics are interwoven rather than taught in separate blocks. For example in chemistry, organic, inorganic and physical chemistry subjects are linked together. This enables students to understand the links between the different strands of the subject.

Leaders and managers have introduced independent study books for students to work through before teachers introduce new topics. Students enjoy the workbooks and benefit from early introductions to terminology and concepts. This enables students to develop their learning more rapidly. Most students interviewed during the monitoring visit stated that they valued the range of online resources and used them effectively to carry out independent research and test their knowledge.

Teachers' checks on students' learning have improved. Teachers set mock tests for students and give them the marking scheme. Students mark their own work and learn exam techniques from seeing model answers. Students with well-developed study skills recognise what they need to do to improve and then set their own targets. Teachers closely monitor the progress that these students make in achieving their targets. However, some students whose independent study skills are not so well developed are sometimes unclear about what they need to do to improve and feedback does not clearly identify the steps they need to take.

What progress have leaders and managers made to ensure that all students on education programmes for young people complete meaningful work experience or work-related activities and develop work-related skills? **Reasonable progress**

Since the previous inspection, leaders and managers have made progress to ensure that more students complete work experience as part of their education programme. Senior leaders have strengthened the management of work experience opportunities. They have recently appointed a member of staff to increase further the quantity and quality of work placements. As a result of these changes, the proportion of students taking part in high-quality work experience has increased.

The vast majority of students on level 2 programmes have completed their work experience and most of the remainder have placements planned. College staff have identified a wide range of good placements including care homes, the local general hospital, schools and businesses. The work placements relate closely to students' core programme aims. For example, students on health and social care programmes with a career aspiration to be paramedics benefit from volunteering in the local hospital, supporting patients pre- and post-operation.

Most students who undertake work experience use logbooks effectively to record their skills development and use them as part of their qualification. However, the quality of entries is not consistently high. A few entries lack sufficient detail to identify the skills that students need to develop in the workplace.

Despite the improvement, the proportion of students on level 3 programmes participating in work experience continues to be too low. However, where staff find it difficult to find placements, they work imaginatively to find students alternative ways of gaining work-related skills. For example, in music and performing arts, teachers have arranged for students to work with professional staff at a local theatre to take

ownership of their own production in the theatre. Students gain useful practice of auditions, performing, writing and production. Other students work together well as a dance troupe and visit local schools to put on shows.

What progress have leaders and managers made to improve the repeated low levels of students' attendance?

Reasonable progress

Since the previous inspection, changes to the management of the curriculum have improved students' attendance. Students' attendance on level 2 programmes has significantly improved and is high and the vast majority remain on their chosen course and achieve. Students' attendance on level 3 programmes continues to be good.

Managers monitor attendance more closely at weekly meetings with heads of department, where they are held to account for courses with low attendance and make changes and interventions where necessary. However, in a small minority of subjects this is not resulting in improvements. For example, although attendance on GCSE English and mathematics courses improved in the first term of the 2019/2020 academic year, it subsequently declined and is now low.

Leaders and managers have strengthened the student-support structure and staff provide high levels of individual support. Student-welfare-support staff see all students when they apply and when they enrol. They provide very helpful information, advice and guidance to ensure that students are placed on the correct course to meet their career aspirations. Staff meet again with students who have enrolled and those who are signposted as late starters during their first term at 'right choice' tutorials to support them further in attending lessons and making progress. Staff work closely with heads of departments and teachers and, as a result, most students remain on their chosen course and attend well. Staff monitor attendance in the morning and afternoon and make contact with students and parents by telephone and/or text messages. As a result, overall attendance patterns show improvement from the low figures at the previous inspection.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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

© Crown copyright 2020