

# Richard Taunton Sixth Form College

Interim visit report

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<b>Unique reference number:</b>	145228
<b>Name of lead inspector:</b>	Andy Fitt, HMI
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<b>Type of provider:</b>	Sixth form college
<b>Address:</b>	Hill Lane Southampton SO15 5RL

## Interim visit

### Context and focus of visit

On 17 March 2020, all routine inspections were suspended due to the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic. As part of our phased return to routine inspections, we are carrying out 'interim visits' to further education and skills providers. Interim visits are to help learners, parents, employers and government understand how providers are meeting the needs of learners and apprentices in this period, including learners with high needs and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

We intend to return to routine inspection in January 2021 but will keep the exact timing under review.

The focus of these visits is on the themes set out below and the findings are based on discussions with leaders, managers, staff and learners.

### Information about the provider

Richard Taunton College is a small sixth-form college in the north west of Southampton and is part of the Lighthouse Learning Trust. The college provides a wide range of academic and vocational courses from level 1 to level 3. At the time of the previous inspection (February 2019) there were 872 students aged 16–18 on study programmes, with most studying at level 3. Just over half of the 95 students aged 19 or over studied at level 2. At the time of the interim visit there were around 960 students, with the majority following courses at level 3. The college does not work with any subcontractors.

### **What actions are leaders taking to ensure that they provide an appropriate curriculum that responds to the reasonable needs of learners and stakeholders and adapts to changed circumstances?**

Leaders, managers and teachers spoke proudly about how quickly they moved to remote learning at the start of lockdown. They were pleased with students' high attendance at online classes during lockdown. They discussed the problems faced by students who required specialist equipment to continue their studies, such as those studying music technology, art and information technology. They described how they had opened the college early to support these students. Leaders talked about the benefits of working with other trust members during and after lockdown. They felt pleased that their curriculum strategy was still led by the needs of the city. They talked about their work to improve students' access to less-popular subjects in Southampton.

Leaders identified the changes they had made to the curriculum as a result of the pandemic. They explained how they had altered the sequence of learning in all subjects to identify and fill gaps in students' missed learning, rather than move straight into new content. They identified the difficulties with practical and group work in class and

described what they had done to solve these problems. They explained how students benefited from similar activities to those they had undertaken before the pandemic, while still keeping safe. For example, dance students choreographed dances that could be performed in a very small space and geography students carried out soil analyses in their gardens, instead of on field trips.

Leaders explained how they had moved to longer taught sessions to reduce the numbers of students on campus at any one time. They told us how the introduction of some new courses had been delayed until the impact of the pandemic on employment in the city was clearer. They expressed their apprehensions about current Year 13 students' perceptions of the worth of progressing to higher education in light of recent news reports about problems faced by new university students.

**What steps are leaders, managers and staff taking to ensure that the approaches used for building knowledge and skills are appropriate to meet the reasonable needs of learners?**

Leaders and managers explained what they had done to check and improve the quality of remote learning. They discussed how the feedback teachers receive after online learning lessons helped them understand how to improve. Leaders talked about the information they had gathered from students, which they had used to inform changes to teaching and learning. They felt that their review of the spring lockdown had improved both their technology and the curriculum for online learning. They expressed confidence that students would be able to continue learning if there were further disruptions in the future.

Staff identified several benefits from the period of remote learning. For example, they described how teachers now use software that enables students who may not want to participate orally to contribute to class discussions. They explained how the introduction of a new web platform helps teachers check students' progress and supports those who are self-isolating. Staff told us how technology has enabled external speakers from industry to contribute to class discussions to help students learn about the world of work.

Leaders talked about changes to tutorial sessions to include more advice and guidance on students' next steps after college. They explained how they had introduced specialist staff to support those going to university.

Staff spoke positively about the benefits of online learning for students. They welcomed the training that they felt had enabled them to quickly become more proficient when working with technology. They described what they had done to support students who needed extra help and those who have high needs. They were pleased that these students' dependence on their support staff had lessened because of the confidence they had gained through online learning. Students that we talked with told us how pleased they were to be back at college and in lessons.

## **How are leaders ensuring that learners are safe and well informed about potential risks, including from online sources?**

Safeguarding leaders talked about what they had done to ensure that students could return safely to college. They described the well-being surveys that helped them identify students who need extra support. They explained their recent investments in resources to improve further the way they inform students about safeguarding topics. They talked about how they ensured that students were safe when online in college.

Staff described the training that they had received which helped them stay up-to-date with safeguarding topics. They explained how they had supported vulnerable students during and after lockdown. Students told us how they learned about keeping themselves safe. They knew who to contact if they had any concerns about their safety. Students gave us some examples about how to safe online. Senior leaders talked about their plans to reinforce this learning in the future.

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