

Sir George Monoux College

Interim visit report

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Name of lead inspector: Saher Nijabat HMI

Visit date(s): 30 September – 1 October 2020

Type of provider: Sixth form college

Address: 190 Chingford Rd,
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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

Sir George Monoux College is a medium-sized sixth form college located in the London Borough of Waltham Forest. The borough has a diverse population and a high proportion of residents are from a minority ethnic background.

The provider currently has around 1,800 students aged 16 to 19 years, with a quarter of them on A-level programmes. The majority of students are on vocational courses at level 3, while a minority are studying at level 2. There are also 10 learners with high needs for whom the college receives extra funding. Many students join the college with lower-than-average prior attainment.

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 and managers continue to offer the same curriculum as before the outbreak of COVID-19. They explained that students have developed good disciplines and routines for studying. They believe this contributed to what they described as a seamless transition to being an 'online college' at the start of the restrictions in March.

Staff received training on how to teach safely and effectively online just before the college closed. Since the college opened again in September, students have a combination of classroom and online lessons. Leaders provide information on safety and well-being to students through induction workshops and videos.

Students and staff report positive changes since their return to college. Staff say that students continue to follow the routines of expected behaviour from when the college was

closed. They believe that students are more able to work independently as a result of online learning. However, leaders recognise that a few students have lost their motivation. They have put in additional resources to provide mentoring and coaching for students who have fallen behind.

Leaders believe that students and parents benefit from having access to course content and student progress information online. For example, students who are self-isolating at home continue to engage with learning.

Leaders and teachers have adapted how they teach some topics, such as science practicals and live performances in creative arts, to online demonstrations. Leaders recognise that work experience for students is a challenge. They are putting in place revised plans with employers to offer work experience opportunities for their students, for many this will be later in the year. Where possible, they have moved work experience projects to be online. For example, photography students receive feedback from professional photographers who have viewed their work online.

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 feel that the move to online learning has led to an increased focus on teaching and learning techniques. Teachers report feeling increasingly confident using the technology in lessons. They record videos and make online learning materials accessible to students for revision and catch up purposes. They speak positively about how they use the online options to keep a close eye on students' submission of work and their progress.

Teachers have completed a large amount of assessment early in the term to ensure students do not fall behind and continue to make suitable progress. They use information from the assessments to identify any gaps in students' knowledge.

Managers have added evening sessions and Saturday events to help cater both for students' academic development and their personal well-being. Students have access to the learning resource centre and can attend catch-up lessons. This includes revision lessons for those taking examinations in English and mathematics.

Leaders and managers have adapted their approach to quality assurance. They use a combination of in-class and virtual observations of lessons, sampling students' assignments and staff feedback to identify and share good practice. For example, during the period when colleges were only open to some learners due to COVID-19 restrictions, students reported that on few occasions online learning sessions were too long. Staff responded by shortening these sessions.

Leaders and managers schedule time for students to access online information on topics such as e-safety and emotional well-being. Students also have allocated time in the week to take part in sports and other extra-curricular activities. Leaders have initiated plans to provide space to students for reflection on learning, progress and

future career or education goals in each term. Staff continue to provide careers advice and guidance to students, and support them with applications to higher education.

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

Leaders have updated their policies and procedures in light of COVID-19 and in relation to an increased use of online learning. They use e-safety software so that they have an overview of how students use online facilities. They have installed hand sanitizer dispensers across the campus.

Staff provided support for vulnerable students and those with high needs throughout the college closure, and gave them the option to come into college. The student welfare team maintained links with external agencies when the college was closed. A group of staff made weekly calls to carry out welfare checks on students.

Students receive information about being safe while using online facilities, and when in the college. They know of the dangers of risks such as online grooming.

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