

# Capital City College Group

Interim visit report

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**Unique reference number:** 130421

**Name of lead inspector:** Jane Hughes HMI

**Visit date(s):** 21–22 October 2020

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

**Address:** Regent's Park Centre  
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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

Capital City College Group was formed in 2016, following the merger of City and Islington College and Westminster Kingsway College. In November 2017, the College of Enfield, Haringey and North East London also joined the group. The group is one of the largest providers of further education in the country. The provision is split across 11 main campuses stretching from Victoria in central London to Enfield in north east London.

At the time of the visit, there were nearly 20,000 learners enrolled at the college. Of these, 9,459 learners are on adult learning programmes, 8,787 are on education programmes for young people and 1,222 are on apprenticeships. There were 245 learners in receipt of high-needs funding. The college provides courses across an extensive range of subjects.

### **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?**

In March, leaders and managers pre-empted the need to close the college and had been working with teachers to move their lessons online several days before the introduction of COVID-19 restrictions. The college's Kennet West specialist skills centre remained open for learners with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). In August, leaders supplied around 4,000 laptops to learners who did not have the right technology to learn online, and helped other learners with internet access.

Leaders, managers and staff say that the COVID-19 pandemic has made them work more closely together and this has improved their communications across the group.

Leaders gave managers clear guidance on how to develop the curriculum for this year. They spent time with teachers looking at the order in which they teach topics and made decisions to bring forward practical elements of their programmes so that learners are ready for their assessments earlier in the year.

Staff have made changes to the curriculum to support learners and apprentices in specific subject areas that have been affected by COVID-19. In health and social care, early years, and hospitality and catering, staff work with employers to put in place virtual work-experience opportunities. For learners with SEND, staff have organised for lessons that are taught at one campus, such as those in music therapy, to be available for learners at other campuses to join online.

Stakeholders, such as local employers and subcontractors, speak positively about how the college works with them to develop the curriculum. Leaders have put in place more short online courses to help learners develop specific skills to help them apply for local jobs and meet employers' needs. Leaders have developed courses in partnership with the local authority to support young learners not in education, employment or training. Staff report that they continue to provide impartial careers guidance to learners.

**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?**

Teachers use computer technology much more now to teach their subjects. They have moved to a mix of face-to-face and online lessons for learners. They say that this approach gives learners much more flexibility to attend should they need to work from home again. For example, adult learners who speak English as an additional language have the choice to attend lessons virtually or at college. In hospitality and catering, topics are taught on a rotation basis and learners who are behind attend extra sessions to catch up.

Teachers feel well supported by their managers and coaches. They appreciate the training they receive to help them teach online. They recognise that not all learners are motivated to learn away from the college. Teachers use frequent course assessments of learners' knowledge and skills. They told inspectors that they use online forms, quizzes and interactive tests to give learners feedback more quickly, and to spot any gaps in learners' knowledge and understanding.

Leaders and managers check the experience learners have through observation of online and college-based lessons, checking learners' work and learner surveys. They use this information to make changes to the curriculum. For example, some learners on A-level and animal care courses asked for extra lessons at college, and these have been put in place.

Teachers in practical subjects have made changes to their curriculum to help learners and apprentices develop and practise their skills as much as possible from home. In

hairdressing, learners engage in practical sessions on putting hair up in different ways. In hospitality and catering, teachers have put on live-streamed masterclasses with professional chefs, followed by question and answer sessions so that learners maintain contact with the world of work. However, learners on public services courses have found the practical elements of their course, such as teamwork and fitness, more challenging to work on.

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

When teachers started teaching online, senior managers provided guidance to staff on protocols to follow to keep themselves and learners safe. They chose software for online lessons that has safety features, such as virtual waiting rooms, so that they could maintain control over who attends the lessons.

Teachers gave learners guidance on appropriate conduct during online lessons. Learners understand the importance of maintaining their privacy, for example by using blurred backgrounds so that others cannot see into their personal space.

Staff provide learners with information about staying safe online when they start at the college, and through follow-up tutorial sessions. Learners told inspectors that they were aware of topics such as transacting money safely and the dangers of online grooming.

When learners returned in August, staff made sure they knew about, and adhered to the measures put in place to minimise the risk of COVID-19 transmission. Learners and staff wear face coverings in all lessons. Managers have set out one-way systems to minimise person-to-person contact in corridors and on stairs, and provide hand sanitisers.

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