

Lambeth College

Interim visit report

Unique reference number: 130413

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Visit date(s): 13 to 14 October 2020

Type of provider: General further education college

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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

Lambeth College is a general further education college situated in the Borough of Lambeth in south London. It is part of London South Bank University (LSBU), following a merger in February 2019. The college has campuses in Clapham and Brixton. Just over 40% of the college's learners are resident in Lambeth, and around 60% are resident in surrounding London boroughs. Two thirds of the learners at the college are adults.

The college currently has around 1,138 students aged 16 to 19 years, 2,163 aged 19+ years and 46 apprentices.

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 supported teachers to move to online teaching in March 2020 when providers closed. Staff attended training early in the pandemic on how to use the online system for teaching. Leaders and teachers recognised that many students missed out on some of their practical training. They used new ways to show students some of the technical elements of their course. For example, in hairdressing, teachers filmed themselves cutting their relatives' hair to show students cutting techniques.

Since the college opened again in September, students have a mixture of classroom and online lessons, depending on their subject, group size and whether they have any special educational needs or disabilities. For example, 16- to 18-year-old students with English as a second language attend face-to-face lessons each week. Students on practical courses, such as construction, attend the college on alternate weeks, completing practical training at college and theory work online from home.

For students with additional learning needs, in the supported learning curriculum area, staff have changed the programme to include one day of remote teaching each week to help students to get used to learning online, in case the college has to close due to further restrictions.

Leaders report that they work closely with their stakeholders, such as local employers, to make specific changes to their curriculum to help them fill the many job vacancies they have. Leaders created programmes to support students to develop the skills they need to apply for these jobs. For example, adult students who have recently been made redundant attend employability courses to become healthcare support workers. These courses are taught in conjunction with the National Health Service and local hospitals. Employers are very positive about how staff respond quickly to their requests for extra courses.

Leaders and managers have implemented a teaching and learning guide to help teachers prepare to move their teaching fully online if needed. Teachers in engineering and sports have recently had to implement their plan due to cohorts of students having to be sent home to self-isolate.

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 state that they changed their approach to teaching very quickly after the announcement that the college would close. They value the training they received to help them move to online delivery, as well as the opportunities they had to discuss the craft of teaching.

Teachers trial different ways to teach their curriculum. For example, on the electrical installation apprenticeship programme, teachers prioritise the delivery of practical skills during face-to-face lessons early in the course. They then cover theory, using the online platform. Teachers are very positive about the opportunities they have to share best practice and work together. They look forward to developing further their online teaching skills.

Staff use a variety of assessment methods to identify the gaps in students' knowledge and the progress they make. They use quizzes, mock examinations, photographs of students' work and verbal assessments. Teachers have set up a buddy system and extra one-to-one discussions to help students who have fallen behind to catch up.

Leaders and managers check on the quality and implementation of the curriculum and students' progress through several activities. These include the use of student feedback surveys and data on how often students access the online learning resources. This helps leaders and managers understand how engaged students are in their learning. Managers have started their observation of face-to-face lessons to evaluate the quality of teaching. This includes the online teaching sessions.

Leaders and managers monitor students' attendance at college and online. They report that attendance is high across subject areas. Managers work with parents, carers and social workers to support students with additional learning needs or vulnerabilities to attend college when required to do so.

Staff say that students continue to receive careers advice and guidance from the learning development coaches, the work experience team and from their teachers sharing their own vocational experience.

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

Leaders have made several physical changes to the college site to support the safety of students and staff. For example, they have introduced a one-way system and have installed hand sanitiser dispensers across the campus.

Leaders have implemented an online code of conduct to support staff and students when working online. Students say they have received extra information about keeping safe online and on how to stay safe during COVID-19. Students know how to report issues, and they are aware that the college has a police officer on site who they can contact if they are worried about their safety.

Staff use the college's safeguarding procedures when identifying and dealing with potential issues. The learning development coaches work with a range of partners to provide ongoing safeguarding support for students.

When the college was closed, leaders provided learning development coaches with mobile telephones to help them stay in contact with students. Students really appreciated the support they received from coaches.

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