

The Bournemouth and Poole College

Progress monitoring report

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Type of provider:	General further education college
Address:	North Road Poole Dorset BH14 0LS

Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

The Bournemouth and Poole College was last inspected in March 2019. At that time, inspectors judged the overall effectiveness of the provision to require improvement.

This monitoring visit focused on the extent to which leaders and those responsible for governance are taking effective action to provide education in the current circumstances. It was undertaken as outlined in the [operational note on visits carried out from January 2021](#) and with reference to the further education and skills handbook.

These visits are to help learners, parents, employers and government understand how providers are meeting the needs of learners in this period, including those with high needs and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Following changes to government guidance and the imposition of COVID-19 (coronavirus) lockdown restrictions, inspectors carried out this monitoring activity remotely. As a result, the range of evidence available to inspectors was narrower than would be the case during an on-site inspection. Therefore, this report provides a more limited level of assurance.

The impact of COVID-19 has been taken into account in the findings and progress judgement below. Inspectors did not evaluate leaders' response to COVID-19 during the spring and summer of 2020, when the provider was not open to all learners and there were no national expectations regarding remote education.

Theme

<p>What progress are leaders and those responsible for governance making to ensure that staff teach a curriculum and provide support to meet learners' needs, including the provision of remote/online learning?</p>	<p>Significant progress</p>
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Leaders and managers have made significant progress in improving the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection.

Leaders and governors have methodically reviewed and refined the range of courses and training the college offers, ensuring that it meets the college's strategic objectives and the needs of learners and employers. For example, following feedback from employers about employment opportunities, leaders have adapted the beauty therapy curriculum to include fashion make-up. Leaders and governors are removing A-level courses from the curriculum as the subject choice is limited and student numbers are low.

Leaders place a high priority on improving the quality of education. Staff benefit from targeted training that is based on their individual needs. For example, new teachers who do not have a teacher training qualification work towards the learning and skills teacher apprenticeship. Electrical engineering teachers have trained in 'smart' meter installation and motor vehicle engineering teachers have learned how to work on electric vehicles. Teachers use this expertise to help students improve their knowledge and skills and become more employable. Teachers now readily ask for and share good practice across subject areas to improve the quality of their teaching.

The new quality-assurance systems, including course-quality review meetings, ensure that weaknesses in subject areas are swiftly identified and actions set for improvement. The reviews focus clearly on all aspects of the student experience. Leaders hold directors and learning managers to account for the quality of education in their subject areas. The business and finance subject area has trailed behind the rest of the college in improving the quality of education. A new learning manager and director have been appointed to improve business and finance teaching. Managers, in the area, identify accurately the improvements made since the previous inspection, and recognise the weaknesses that remain. They have put actions in place to improve these.

Following the previous inspection, the chair and deputy chair retired from the governing body and were replaced by two existing governors. Governors now place a sharper focus on the quality of education. Governors have a better understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the college, challenging leaders stringently and holding them to account for their actions.

Since the previous inspection, managers have made significant improvements to the teaching of English and mathematics. Where previously English and mathematics were taught in any available classrooms across the college campuses, they now have designated areas with specialist learning resources. Thorough assessment of students' existing skills and knowledge means that teachers personalise their English and mathematics curriculum. English teachers, mathematics teachers and vocational teachers work closely together to develop students' English and mathematics skills. For example, construction students develop skills in converting measurements, and childcare students use technical vocabulary, such as 'metacognition', correctly. English teachers and mathematics teachers help vocational teachers develop their own skills, such as in proofreading and marking students' work.

An improvement identified at the previous inspection was for more students to complete relevant work experience. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdowns, this has been problematic. Leaders, managers and staff have become more creative in planning for work experience. Many students currently take part in virtual work experience. For example, business students attend workplaces virtually, shadowing key members of staff. Students on health and social care programmes and applied science programmes attend COVID-19 safe work experience placements, such as in COVID-19 vaccination centres and health hubs.

A small number of students continue to study on site. Staff work hard to make the learning environment COVID-19 safe. Students work collaboratively with peers who currently learn online.

Teachers are inventive in creating online learning activities for students to develop their knowledge and skills. Following practical demonstrations, students are tasked with completing skills tests. For example, hairdressing students watch demonstrations of blow-drying techniques before filming themselves practising on family members and uploading the clips for peer assessment.

Teachers monitor closely students who are at risk of leaving their courses early. They contact personal development tutors, who provide additional support for students who have fallen behind in their studies, to help them to catch up. Students who have periods of poor mental health or well-being issues are referred swiftly to the welfare and safeguarding team for support.

In September 2020, managers amended the sequencing of students' programmes so that students would be better prepared for online learning if there were any further national or local lockdowns. For example, students benefited from personal development sessions in staying safe online, including the dangers of online radicalisation and extremism, gambling and gaming.

Leaders and those responsible for governance should take further action to:

- ensure a high quality of education across all subjects and courses.

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