

The National College for Advanced Transport and Infrastructure

Progress monitoring report

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Type of provider:	General further education college
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Monitoring visit:

Context and focus of visit

The National College for Advanced Transport and Infrastructure was last inspected in November 2019. At that time, inspectors judged the overall effectiveness of the provision to be inadequate.

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

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? Significant progress

Following the previous inspection, board members took steps to review the leadership and the quality of teaching and support for learners at The National College for Advanced Transport and Infrastructure (NCATI). The appointment of an interim principal led to the streamlining of senior positions to provide clear lines of responsibility to help drive improvement. During the monitoring visit, learners and apprentices were able to describe the changes that have taken place at NCATI. They explained how these changes have significantly improved the quality of training and support they receive.

Senior leaders and board members work together to monitor the quality of education. The introduction of weekly management meetings, refined key performance targets, and enhanced reporting have led to improved scrutiny and challenge from the board. Board members have a comprehensive understanding of senior leaders' actions to tackle areas such as finance, staff performance, and where learners and apprentices are at risk of falling behind in their studies.

Managers and teachers have successfully implemented changes to teaching the curriculum following the move to remote teaching. Teachers have reordered teaching blocks to ensure that practical skills are taught at a time when it is safe to do so. They have been innovative in their approaches to teaching topics remotely. For example, teachers in functional skills mathematics sessions use 'interactive concept boards' so that learners on access programmes can demonstrate worked examples to the group. Level 4 high speed rail apprentices have reviewed the placement of electrical substations in their local areas. Teachers have then used the knowledge apprentices have gained to teach them how to apply this knowledge to the rail industry.

Managers and teachers have significantly improved the assessment of learners' and apprentices' starting points. Teachers conduct thorough assessments at the start of each teaching block. They use the results of assessment to inform the length of the programme. Where apprentices do not demonstrate a secure understanding of key topics, teachers revisit and reteach these. However, on a few occasions teachers do not explain well enough the need to reteach some subjects. As a result, a few apprentices do not understand why they are revisiting topics they have already learned.

Managers and teachers closely monitor learners' and apprentices' progress. Teachers provide additional help to those who are falling behind in their studies or request extra help. Tutors provide additional revision sessions for those who are close to taking their end-point assessment. Teachers and staff have supported a small number of learners and apprentices to return to on-site teaching where they have faced difficulties studying from home.

Teachers provide helpful feedback to learners and apprentices on their written work. They provide clear feedback for improvements related to subject content, so that apprentices can complete their work to a high standard. Teachers provide guidance to apprentices in level 5 operations management to ensure that their assignment work reflects their job roles. However, on a few occasions teachers do not ensure that apprentices improve the skills they need for assignment writing. A few apprentices make mistakes too often when using references in their work. Teachers have not retaught these skills well enough for apprentices to improve their written work.

Teachers and employers work together to plan carefully the apprenticeship programme. Managers keep the large majority of employers well informed on the progress apprentices are making on their programme. Employers ensure that

apprentices can apply into the workplace the skills and knowledge they have learned. Employers identify opportunities for apprentices to apply their training in other departments. Employers value the training that apprentices receive. As a result, an increasing proportion of apprentices are gaining high grades at the end of their programme and are successful at work.

Senior leaders, board members and staff have taken their time to review thoroughly the culture of safeguarding at NCATI. The board identified a member to oversee closely the improvements to safeguarding. A new appointment of a designated safeguarding lead was made. The safeguarding team has trained staff on key topics such as the identification of bullying and harassment, and how to report these concerns. Teachers, assessors and employers prioritise the checking of apprentices' understanding of safeguarding during reviews. As a result, most learners and apprentices have a good understanding of these topics.

Staff have provided learners and apprentices with the information they need to stay safe when working online and remotely. They quickly identify and act where there are areas of concern. For example, staff identified that learners were accessing misinformation on COVID-19 and vaccines through social media. The revision of policies and the sharing of information ensured that learners became well informed of the risks in accessing misinformation online.

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

- ensure that teachers plan their teaching to provide opportunities for apprentices to recap and revisit the study skills they need to complete their written work.

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