

Capital City College Group

Progress monitoring report

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Type of provider: General further education college

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Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

Capital City College Group was last inspected in January 2020. 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 and training 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?

Reasonable progress

Leaders and managers take effective action to improve the quality of education that learners and apprentices receive. They know the strengths and weaknesses of the college well. They recognise that further work is needed to ensure that the quality of education is consistently high across all curriculum areas, particularly in A levels, and in English and mathematics at level 2 and below.

Since the previous inspection, leaders and managers have strengthened communications with apprentices' employers. Assessors now hold regular reviews with apprentices to assess their progress. As a result, employers and assessors have

a better awareness of apprentices' progress and can provide more targeted support in the workplace.

Tutors across all provision types have carefully considered how the curriculum is designed. They consider how different components of what they teach fit together, and what foundation knowledge learners need to be successful. For example, on level 2 applied science, a mix of chemistry, physics and biology topics is selected to match with career pathways, such as a physics focus within engineering.

Where necessary, tutors adapt the curriculum creatively to make up for the lack of practical lessons during national restrictions. For instance, on professional chef programmes, tutors introduced a 'cook-a-long' session where learners watch the tutor demonstrate online how to cook a dish, and learners cook this at the same time at home. However, tutors acknowledge that in a few areas, learners need to catch up on skills they have not been able to acquire, such as being able to multi-task in kitchens.

Most tutors are skilled at using online learning platforms to teach. Tutors mostly create good resources to use in online lessons, such as well-crafted interactive presentations, video clips and journal articles. However, tutors' ability to hold learners' and apprentices' attention and use strategies to deepen and check what learners and apprentices know varies across different subjects. At times, teachers struggle to engage learners in discussion during online lessons.

Tutors ensure that learners on vocational programmes have a realistic insight into possible areas of work. They arrange for external guest speakers to present to learners. For example, learners on level 1 plumbing benefit from external industry professionals talking to them about the world of work as a plumber.

The extent to which learners and apprentices receive useful feedback on their work varies too much across different programmes. Apprentices receive feedback that helps them improve their work, including clear guidance on the quality of their writing. However, on A-level programmes and supported internships, learners do not receive the same degree of useful feedback. While tutors do inform learners of what they have done well, and what they need to improve, information about how to do this is not clear. Tutors' feedback to A-level learners is often too late to be of use to them when they complete their next assignment.

Most learners gain new knowledge and skills and their work is of a good standard. Most tutors use effective strategies to test learners' understanding of key concepts that they have learned. Tutors make effective use of interactive assessments such as quizzes to establish whether learners are developing knowledge. Most learners receive helpful feedback from mock exam results that helps them develop. Level 2 music performance and production learners receive weekly developmental feedback and coaching from tutors that enable them to make improvements. However, A-level tutors do not use assessment well enough to provide learners with an understanding of gaps in their knowledge and how to bridge these.

Tutors provide learners with helpful information about their next steps. Learners understand the opportunities available to them and become ambitious about their progression. For example, in travel and tourism, tutors explain the various roles within the industry, such as cabin crew or travel agents. Learners become interested in learning more about these roles. However, apprentices are not always sure of the opportunities available to them at the end of the programme and do not understand the next steps that they can take after completing their apprenticeship programme.

Managers have a strong focus on providing support to vulnerable learners to ensure their well-being. Learners have access to a variety of effective support services at college, such as counselling, therapies, learning support and extra-curricular sessions that focus on promoting their mental health and well-being. Learners appreciate the effective personal support they receive from staff with welfare matters. Learners and apprentices feel safe and know whom to contact should they need support and guidance from staff.

Leaders and those responsible for governance should take further action to ensure that all learners and apprentices receive:

- high-quality education across the different campuses
- timely and clear feedback that helps them to improve the standard and quality of their work.

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