

Building Crafts College

Progress monitoring report

Unique reference number:	50888
Name of lead inspector:	Mike Finn, Her Majesty's Inspector
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Type of provider:	Not for profit organisation
Address:	Kennard Road London E15 1AH

Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

Building Crafts College 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 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

Governors have recently appointed a new principal who has worked with college leaders to develop realistic plans for improvement. Governors have established more robust governance arrangements since the previous inspection. They now provide more challenge to leaders in relation to the quality of education.

Leaders have improved the training that they offer to tutors since the previous inspection, including the introduction of a weekly staff development session. A recent focus on using videoconferencing software has enabled tutors to develop the skills and confidence they need to teach online.

Tutors engage learners well in online learning. They use effective strategies to involve the majority of learners in lessons. For example, in mathematics, leaders and tutors have successfully reduced the size of teaching groups online, so that tutors are able to interact with learners more effectively. In bench joinery lessons, tutors ask learners to contribute to class discussion by name to involve everyone effectively in the online lesson.

The extent to which tutors consistently provide helpful feedback to learners varies across different programmes, or parts of programmes. On education programmes for young people, and in the technical skills aspects of apprenticeships, tutors and assessors give useful feedback to learners and apprentices so that they know how to improve. However, on the English and mathematics components, tutors do not give sufficient guidance so that learners and apprentices know how to improve. In a few cases, learners do not have a good enough understanding of the progress they make towards completion and are not always sure whether they are on target to complete their training on time.

Governors and leaders do not have a complete enough picture of the progress that learners and apprentices make, and therefore the overall performance on different programmes. Leaders do not have a secure enough overview of apprentices' progress on all components of their apprenticeship. For example, during the pandemic, for a minority of apprentices, employers have struggled to provide adequate time for apprentices' training.

Tutors do not adequately link the knowledge that they teach learners in English or mathematics lessons with its application within the industry that learners work. As a result, learners and apprentices do not fully see the relevance of the work they do in English or mathematics to the construction industry, or how they might use the knowledge gained in these subjects in their future careers.

The majority of learners develop new practical skills. For example, apprentices in the second year of their carpentry programme could explain how they have learned basic skills such as joints on timber and practised them so that they can use joints effectively in more complex tasks, such as making a chest of drawers.

Leaders and tutors provide effective support for learners at the college, and have expanded the range of support available due to the pandemic. For example, leaders now offer all learners the opportunity to attend counselling sessions online if required, as they are aware that the range of learner welfare issues has increased.

Tutors support learners well to complete the work that they are set. Tutors are available to learners within and outside of lessons by email. They respond in a timely way to provide the support that learners need. Where learners are in need of additional learning support, staff meet with them online on a one-to-one basis.

Learners feel safe and know who they can contact if they have any worries or concerns. Leaders and tutors make telephone calls to learners at least weekly to check on their well-being.

Tutors provide effective careers advice and guidance to learners. For example, they help them to develop an industry-specific curriculum vitae. They also refer them to local apprenticeship and employment opportunities within the industry. As a result, learners develop an understanding of the possible next steps upon completing their courses.

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

- ensure that teaching in mathematics and English is fully linked to vocational training, so that learners know how to use these subjects when working in the construction industry
- improve their oversight of apprentices' progress across all components of their programme and ensure that where gaps exist in training as a result of the pandemic, this is made up.

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