

Inspire Education Group

Monitoring visit report

Unique reference number:	130613
Name of lead inspector:	Sambit Sen, Her Majesty's Inspector
Inspection dates:	22 and 23 September 2021
Type of provider:	General further education college
Address:	Park Crescent Peterborough Cambridgeshire PE1 4DZ

Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

On 1 August 2020, Peterborough Regional College and New College Stamford merged to form Inspire Education Group. Through this merger, Peterborough Regional College is now known as Peterborough College, and New College Stamford is known as Stamford College. A levels are offered exclusively at the Stamford site. The monitoring visit took place to review and evaluate the progress governors, leaders and staff have made to establish a shared strategic direction for the new college and the improvements made in the quality of provision since the previous inspection of Peterborough Regional College in May 2019. At the time of the monitoring visit, there were approximately 4,600 students aged 16 to 19, 900 apprentices and over 1,000 adult students. Inspire Education Group currently works with 11 subcontractors, of which four offer apprenticeships, three offer education programmes for young people and seven offer adult learning programmes.

Themes

What progress have leaders and managers made in maintaining high-quality education and training during the ongoing pandemic. Significant progress

Leaders and governors have worked tirelessly to achieve a successful merger during the pandemic, ensuring that existing best practice is shared and implemented across both sites. Leaders have made sure that staff across the college group understand and implement the college values of putting students and apprentices at the centre of everything they do. As a result, staff morale has improved significantly, and staff are proud to work for the wider group.

Leaders carefully plan the curriculum to suit the level and specialisms of the subject areas. They have maintained a blended learning approach on higher-level courses, particularly for theory teaching. Vocational programmes below level 3 are taught face to face at both sites. In A levels, most subjects are now taught face to face. This has allowed students to quickly return to their studies at the start of this academic year.

Leaders have put in place a highly effective virtual learning platform. They have invested in technology that enables students and apprentices to continue to make good progress with their studies while studying remotely. Students and apprentices value and benefit from the help they receive from their teachers and assessors through the frequent one-to-one sessions and feedback on their work.

Support for students and apprentices to help them to catch up on lost learning is highly effective. Teachers ensure that they accurately identify any gaps in students' and apprentices' knowledge at the start of the academic year. Teachers correctly identified that new students needed to develop their academic writing and study skills. Returning students on vocational programmes needed extra opportunities to practise

and refine their practical skills to become competent, confident professionals. Teachers skilfully adjust their teaching using this information, giving students and apprentices every opportunity to make good progress. Leaders have worked with employers to agree extra days each week for apprentices to attend practical workshop classes to complete any assessments that apprentices have missed.

What progress have governors, leaders and managers made in establishing an ambitious curriculum to meet the education and training needs of students, apprentices and college stakeholders?

Significant progress

Leaders and managers carefully research, plan and implement their curriculum to meet the local and regional skills and training needs. Leaders have invested significantly in building new industry standard teaching facilities in construction and green technologies. Leaders and managers collaborate highly successfully with partner colleges to design new qualifications in aviation and space engineering. They proactively work with targeted local employer federations, such as in hospitality and road haulage. As a result they are preparing students and apprentices to work in sectors with identified skills shortages and future employment opportunities.

Governors have an excellent awareness of the skills needs of the local communities in Peterborough, Lincolnshire and Cambridgeshire. They inform and support senior leaders in designing a curriculum that meets these needs. Through their highly effective discussions with a variety of external agencies, such as the Local Enterprise Partnership and the Combined Authority, they have supported leaders' decisions to develop specialist qualifications in engineering, sustainable construction technology, information technology and uniformed services.

Peterborough Regional College's previous inspection found that teachers do not use information about students' and apprentices' starting points and potential barriers to learning, effectively when planning and providing learning. Teachers have rectified this and now ensure that teaching and learning enables students and apprentices to develop their knowledge, skills and professional behaviours appropriately, regardless of their starting points. Consequently, students and apprentices are thoroughly prepared for success in their chosen careers.

What progress have governors, leaders and managers made in taking effective action to remedy the key areas of development in the predecessor colleges? How effective are quality improvement processes?

Significant progress

Leaders and managers have taken rapid and sustained action to improve effectively the quality of teaching and learning at the Peterborough site. Teachers receive good quality coaching and training to become better teachers. They use a range of effective approaches with their students to enable them to understand complex

concepts and progress through their qualifications swiftly. Leaders have aligned quality review processes across the group, identifying and implementing best practice. Curriculum leads have good access to useful and accurate performance data about their areas. They use this information usefully to focus on continually improving the quality of learning.

Leaders' actions to improve the quality of apprenticeship provision have resulted in rapid improvement. Most apprentices now achieve their qualifications in a timely manner and have a positive learning experience. Managers accurately identify apprentices at risk and intervene quickly to help these apprentices catch up. As a result, most apprentices pass their final examinations on their first attempt.

The achievement of students on A-level programmes has significantly improved over the last three years. Leaders have invested significantly in their A-Level provision. They regularly review the appropriateness of the subjects offered within this provision and have invested in appropriately skilled staff. Leaders have adopted innovative strategies such as training and developing internal staff to ensure that they have sufficient subject specialist teachers.

What progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that students receive ongoing careers advice to make informed decisions about their next steps? **Significant progress**

Most students and apprentices are very well informed about their next steps and future career aspirations. Leaders and teachers ensure that students and apprentices have extensive opportunities to make good use of the relevant information provided to inform their future careers. These include use of specialist careers advisors, the college's virtual learning environment, and a broad range of opportunities to work with employers. Students continually reflect, discuss and review their career and learning options with their tutors through the cross-college careers programme.

Apprentices are clear about their career aspirations and know how to make these aspirations a reality. They have a sound understanding of the progression routes available to them, planning their career path appropriately.

Despite the ongoing pandemic, leaders have enabled a high proportion of students at level 3 to access relevant work experience. Leaders, managers and teachers remain committed to enabling students to continue accessing work experience to consolidate and strengthen their learning.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for students of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2021