

# Capital City College Group

Report following a monitoring visit to a 'requires improvement' provider

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<b>Name of lead inspector:</b>	Saher Nijabat, Her Majesty's Inspector
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<b>Address:</b>	Kings Cross Centre 211 Gray's Inn Road London WC1X 8RA

## Monitoring visit: main findings

### Context and focus of visit

Capital City College Group was formed in 2016, following the merger of City and Islington College and Westminster Kingsway College. In November 2017, the College of Enfield, Haringey and North East London also joined the group. The group is one of the largest providers of further education in the country. The provision is split across 10 main campuses stretching from Victoria in central London to Enfield in north east London.

Capital City College Group was inspected in January 2020. At that time, inspectors judged the overall effectiveness of the provision to require improvement.

The focus of this monitoring visit was to evaluate the progress that leaders and managers have made in addressing the main areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection.

At the time of the monitoring visit, there were nearly 26,700 learners enrolled at the college. Of these, 16,213 learners were on adult learning programmes, 8,897 on education programmes for young people and 1,574 on apprenticeships. There were 436 learners in receipt of high needs funding. The college provides courses across an extensive range of subjects.

### Themes

#### **What progress have leaders and managers made in improving communication with employers to ensure that employers and apprentices' managers know about the progress their apprentices make? Significant progress**

Since their previous inspection, leaders and managers have taken decisive and positive action to improve their communication with apprentices' employers. They have successfully implemented more frequent progress reviews. Staff set clear expectations with employers at the start of the programme. They agree on the dates of progress reviews in advance and make effective use of online tools to engage with the employers. Most apprentices' line managers take part in reviews. As a result, they have a better understanding of apprentices' strengths and weaknesses.

Most apprentices' employers and line managers have a clear understanding of the progress their apprentices make. They find the discussions during progress reviews, the additional tutor visits and email updates extremely helpful. As a result of this frequent communication, employers and line managers provide specific support to help apprentices improve their skills and professional behaviours. For example, in the commis chef apprenticeship, line managers set tasks for apprentices, such as working at the 'pass' and

giving other chefs customer orders, to improve apprentices' confidence.

Staff effectively encourage apprentices' line managers to reflect on apprentices' contributions in the workplace. As a result, apprentices' line managers recognise the positive work-based behaviours apprentices demonstrate. For example, apprentices' line managers on the electrical installation programme note that apprentices are punctual, attend regularly and get on well with their customers and colleagues. In the veterinary nursing apprenticeship, employers report that apprentices improve their practical skills in tasks such as applying an intravenous catheter.

Leaders and managers closely monitor the frequency of progress reviews to ensure they are completed on time. However, in a minority of cases, such as in the veterinary nursing apprenticeship, staff do not complete reviews as often as in other curriculum areas, and some reviews are overdue.

**How much progress have leaders and managers made in minimising disruptions to young learners' teaching, particularly at the start of their programmes?      Significant progress**

Leaders and managers ensure that young learners do not experience disruption at the start of their programme. They have sensibly reviewed and improved how they communicate staff and timetable changes with learners. Learners have access to their timetables at the start of their course. Staff share these timetables on the learners' portal and via online platforms to ensure ease of access at any time. Staff also notify learners of any staff absences via online platforms.

Leaders have taken appropriate action to ensure learners benefit from a continuity of support and teaching to help them learn. For example, teachers share lesson materials and resources with learners via online platforms. Leaders ensure suitably trained staff are available to cover staff absences. For example, at Kings Cross, when there are staff absent, existing staff provide suitable cover and set learners work. As a result, there are very few changes to learners' timetables, and learners have constant access to learning resources.

Since the previous inspection, leaders have strengthened the learner enrolment and induction process. Young learners, both on vocational programmes and A levels, are consistently positive about the arrangements at the start of their course. For example, A-level social sciences learners at the City and Islington campus had useful pre-course summer activities to help prepare them for the start of college. They gained knowledge about their chosen subjects and received useful information about work placements and assessments. Consequently, young learners felt well prepared for their programmes at the start of their course.

**How much progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that teachers of A-level learners assess learners' gaps in knowledge and understanding effectively and use this information well to inform their curriculum? Reasonable progress**

Since the previous inspection, leaders and managers have provided effective staff development to improve teachers' skills. For example, they have provided A-level teachers with training to help them better identify gaps in learners' knowledge and skills. Teachers value the individual support they receive and speak enthusiastically about being asked to focus on the 'one thing' they need to improve upon at any one time.

Leaders have implemented a number of initiatives, such as a new assessment cycle, to ensure consistency in the regularity at which staff check learners' understanding. However, leaders acknowledge that these initiatives are not yet fully embedded or used consistently by staff across their campuses.

Teachers make effective use of strategies to check learners' understanding in lessons. They revisit topics taught earlier in the course and test learners' recall through effective questioning. Consequently, teachers know what individual learners do and do not know, and so provide learners with valuable opportunities to practise and prepare for their examinations.

Teachers demonstrate an appropriate understanding of the disruption to teaching that many learners have experienced due to COVID-19. They complete a thorough assessment of learners' subject knowledge at the start of the year. Teachers use this information well to inform the curriculum. For example, in mathematics, teachers teach algebra at the start of the year to cover gaps in knowledge that learners have missed when studying mathematics at GCSE.

Teachers make good use of mock examinations to assess learners' strengths and weaknesses. At the City and Islington campus, teachers make effective use of the results of timed assessments to give learners useful feedback on their work. As a result, learners know what they need to focus on to make improvements. Teachers complete timed assessments at the Kings Cross campus slightly later in the term. Consequently, learners at this campus have less time to make the necessary improvements to their work.

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