

Southampton City College

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

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Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

Southampton City College was inspected in February 2022. 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 resolving the main areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection.

Themes

What progress have leaders made to ensure managers and staff have the knowledge and support to improve the quality of education rapidly?

Reasonable progress

Since the previous inspection, leaders and managers have taken effective action to ensure they review and improve the quality of education for most learners. They have ensured clear and effective systems are in place for governors to challenge leaders and staff to make rapid improvements. Leaders and managers monitor the quality of teaching frequently to identify teachers' training needs. Leaders use this information carefully to provide targeted development opportunities, which teachers value. For example, experienced managers provide useful, timely feedback for teachers which helps them to understand their strengths and areas for development clearly. Teaching staff value the beneficial support from teaching and learning coaches who help them to develop a range of teaching techniques quickly and effectively. Leaders recognise that these actions are in their infancy and that not all teachers, particularly those teaching apprentices, develop their teaching skills swiftly enough.

Leaders have successfully identified the skills gaps of newly appointed teachers. They use this information diligently to provide a comprehensive induction programme which helps new teachers to build the skills and confidence they need to be successful. For example, leaders and managers provide training on key topics such as behaviour management and feedback, which staff value highly and implement into their teaching practice quickly. Leaders and managers ensure these staff benefit from a skilled teaching and learning coach, who supports them to integrate these new skills into their planning and teaching.

What progress have leaders made to ensure apprentices' learning plans take account of starting points and link on- and off-the-job training effectively, to ensure apprentices can make rapid progress?

Reasonable progress

Leaders and managers have worked tirelessly since the previous inspection to improve the progress that apprentices make and consequently their outcomes. Despite initial challenges in recruiting appropriate staff, leaders have now appointed a highly skilled manager who is leading staff effectively. Managers have carried out a thorough analysis of the quality of training and now have a clear understanding of why apprentices have not been making the progress that they should. They have implemented an action plan successfully, and as a result, the number of apprentices at risk of not completing their training has reduced. Leaders recognise that the positive impact of this action plan has not been swift enough to ensure that all apprentices make the rapid progress of which they are capable.

Leaders have ensured they check apprentices' English and mathematics skills, including those who are exempt from taking these qualifications. Tutors identify gaps in apprentices' skills and knowledge successfully. They use this information well to plan apprentices' learning and have allocated appropriate time and individual tutoring to support these apprentices to succeed.

The vast majority of apprentices understand and can explain the progress they are making well. Teachers work effectively to ensure apprentices develop the necessary skills, knowledge and behaviours that employers are looking for. Leaders have not yet ensured that they monitor progress effectively between the employer and the college. As a result, not all apprentices are able to make the rapid progress of which they are capable.

What progress have leaders taken to ensure all learners and apprentices benefit from clear and timely feedback so they can improve their work and skills? **Reasonable progress**

Leaders and managers have worked effectively with the vast majority of teachers on education programmes for young people and adult learning to improve the quality of feedback they provide for learners. In most cases, teachers provide learners with clear and timely feedback that enables them to understand what they are doing well and what they need to do to improve. These learners make effective use of this feedback and improve the quality of their work as a result. Teachers on apprenticeship programmes have not benefited from this training and do not consistently provide apprentices with clear and timely feedback. As a result, not all apprentices are clear on how to improve the quality of their work.

Teachers check learners' understanding and identify gaps in their knowledge quickly. They revisit topics carefully and use intelligent questioning which helps learners to fill these gaps successfully in their academic and practical work. Teachers frequently set challenging targets which motivate most students well and help them to believe in themselves and enjoy their learning. For example, teachers in barbering provide frequent feedback in practical sessions, which ensures learners are challenged and can reflect skilfully on their cutting techniques. Teachers in English and mathematics functional skills provide swift feedback which is detailed and highly valued by learners. They provide supportive one-to-one meetings with learners to discuss their

progress and praise their achievements. As a result, these learners are making rapid progress and speak positively about their learning.

What progress have leaders taken to improve the advice and guidance for learners on education programmes for young people so they can transition effectively into the workplace? Reasonable progress

Leaders and managers have worked well to improve the advice and guidance learners receive to help them understand and prepare for their next steps. Most teachers use their knowledge of, and connections with, their industries well to provide students with opportunities to learn about careers opportunities. Leaders have developed and implemented 'my career plan', which helps learners to reflect on their career plans, receive effective guidance from skilled and knowledgeable staff, and consider what they need to do to progress successfully. Learners value the guidance from staff to build their CVs, and they appreciate the support they receive to research different career paths and universities. Learners who access this support speak positively about their improved awareness of career opportunities and feel more confident about how to transition from college to their next steps. Leaders recognise that these changes are in their infancy and that not all learners currently benefit from valuable advice and guidance.

At the point of the previous inspection, too few learners were gaining valuable employability skills. Leaders have made effective progress to ensure all learners benefit from useful work experience or work-related experience by the end of their programmes. Many learners have already participated in work placements relevant to their future career plans.

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