

Coventry College

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

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Name of lead inspector:	Stuart Collett, His Majesty's Inspector
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Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

Coventry College was inspected in November 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.

Since the previous inspection, the college has ceased delivery of apprenticeships. As a result, the themes selected for the monitoring visit did not include any findings related to apprenticeships found in the previous report.

Themes

What progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that employers are involved in the planning of the development of the curriculum to ensure that learners acquire the knowledge and skills they need for future employment?

Reasonable progress

Since the previous inspection, leaders have accelerated their work in engaging employers in the planning and development of their curriculums. They have implemented several short-term initiatives, which are already having an impact on their current learners, and they are working more strategically to plan for their future curriculum. For example, they hosted a robotics fair for engineering students, giving them the opportunity to engage with advanced robotic resources and meet sector experts.

Leaders have worked with the local authority and employers to provide Skills Bootcamps and work academy programmes targeted at meeting the skills needs of the local area. For example, a significant number of local businesses participated in a business sustainability bootcamp to upskill their senior leaders to achieve their sustainability targets in line with the regional target to become net zero. Following the success of this bootcamp and considerable local demand, leaders are offering further courses in this subject area.

Leaders have introduced 'skills for the future' panels to engage with employers from the local area to help shape leaders' strategic curriculum intent and design. While the full impact of these panels on curriculum content cannot yet be seen, there are early signs that the curriculum in several areas has already benefitted. For example, leaders have embedded more electric skills development into their motor vehicle curriculum following feedback from industry leaders.

Stakeholders discuss how leaders are more involved in supporting local infrastructure projects, particularly those that will highlight skills gaps in the city. Leaders are working proactively to offer courses, such as retrofit skills to improve energy efficiency, to help local businesses meet the needs of their supply chains and support unemployed learners into long-term jobs in the city.

What progress have leaders and managers made in developing and implementing quality assurance activities which focus on ensuring that learners consistently receive high-quality teaching?

Reasonable progress

Since the previous inspection, leaders have continued their investment in improving the quality of teaching learners receive. They have continued with their existing quality assurance strategy, including industry days for teaching staff and further quality assurance activities in all areas of the provision. Additionally, leaders have sought external expertise to help them develop a college-wide quality standard called the 'Coventry Quality Mark', which sets out the standards of teaching leaders aspire to for every learner.

Leaders have invested in providing more time for learning coaches to support teachers in developing their teaching skills. Learning coaches are now more active throughout the college, often occupying key curriculum roles within their subjects. They help teachers from a variety of subjects by undertaking activities such as weekly professional development sessions, learning walks, and providing one-to-one support.

More recently, learning coaches have been instrumental in the development and introduction of leaders' vision of 'six things that work', a suite of focused professional development activities designed to support teachers to further develop their teaching skills in six key areas, including recall and retrieval, knowledge organisation, and the power of feedback. While this initiative is relatively new, teachers already recognise and value how this approach is helping them to improve and adapt their teaching while sharing best practice with their peers from across the college.

Leaders have revisited their quality of teaching, learning and assessment strategy and have revised it to ensure that appropriate activities are in place at key points to measure the impact of the initiatives they have put into place. However, as some of these initiatives are still in their infancy, it is too soon to judge the full impact these will have on the quality of teaching learners receive.

What progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that adult learners routinely receive high-quality, unbiased career education, information, advice and guidance so that they are aware of the opportunities available to them?

Reasonable progress

Since the previous inspection, Leaders have expanded adult learners' access to careers services at the college. They have created additional roles to increase the capacity and reach of the careers team in their adult learning programmes.

Leaders have strengthened external support to help them to deliver careers education, information, advice and guidance to adult learners. For example, they now have a fortnightly visit from a national careers service advisor to offer careers advice to adult learners on a one-to-one and group basis. Leaders now measure the number of adult learners who engage with this service and demonstrate that the number of adult learners who have accessed this resource is rising.

Leaders have developed a careers advice online resource, which is accessible to all learners and offers a range of services such as job vacancies, apprenticeship information, and higher education application guidance. However, as this resource is new, not all learners are fully aware of it and how it can help them.

Curriculum leaders have implemented several changes to their curriculum to ensure that adult learners receive careers advice during their course. For example, changes include using job boards, making links in the curriculum between the skills learners are developing and potential career opportunities, and inviting external speakers to discuss the opportunities available. Curriculum leaders responsible for English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) courses have revised their curriculum to ensure that learners have access to career pathways in key sector areas, such as health and social care, hairdressing, and barbering. All ESOL learners receive bespoke advice on CV building and interview preparation.

What progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that the curriculum for adults extends beyond their immediate qualifications and supports them to develop confidence, resilience and knowledge so that they can keep themselves mentally and physically healthy?

Reasonable progress

Leaders and managers have focused well on ensuring that personal development features as a key element in the education adult learners receive at the college. They recognised the importance of understanding the needs of adult learners and tailoring the personal development curriculum to meet their needs more closely. They have worked collaboratively with learners, tutors and well-being coaches to identify what these needs are before developing a suite of resources to provide adult learners with the information they will find most useful.

Leaders have invested in strengthening the team by appointing a lead for personal development and developing resources, such as a dashboard of information for adult learners, on a variety of topics, including physical and mental well-being.

Leaders and managers have developed different approaches to how elements of personal development can be best targeted to reach adult learners according to the length and hours of the programme they undertake. Adult learners attending college

for a substantial number of hours access personal development topics in lessons via the main curriculum. Adult learners attending fewer hours are signposted to self-help information and are supported in developing ownership of their development and resilience.

Adult learners, particularly those studying at the college for longer, demonstrate a raised awareness of personal development topics, such as the importance of nutrition and exercise in supporting brain activity and learning.

Leaders recognise that while the new mental health and well-being platform has been designed already, further work is needed to ensure that it meets the needs of learners and that content is translated into different languages so that it is accessible to ESOL learners at all levels.

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