

Cambian Dilston College

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

Unique reference number:	131868
Name of lead inspector:	Hayley Lomas, His Majesty's Inspector
Inspection dates:	8 and 9 November 2023
Type of provider:	Independent specialist college
Address:	Dilston Hall Corbridge Northumberland NE45 5RJ

Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

Cambian Dilston College was inspected in January 2023. 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

How much progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that learners benefit from consistently good teaching? Reasonable progress

Since the last inspection, leaders and managers have reviewed the college's staffing structure. They have established new roles, such as a curriculum leader to work closely with education and care staff to ensure that they are helping learners to prepare for their next steps. In addition, leaders have reviewed the job descriptions and duties of all staff and made amendments where necessary, including making it clear that all staff are responsible for outcomes for learners. Newly appointed staff are highly skilled and experienced, and are able to support colleagues by modelling good practice, which staff value.

Leaders and managers have put in place training to improve the teaching skills of staff. All teaching staff now attend training sessions on sharing subject-specific knowledge and best practice, both within the college and as part of the wider Cambian Group. Training also includes enhancing understanding of a trauma-informed model of behaviour management. As a result, staff are more confident in their lesson planning and in their use of a range of teaching methods.

Most tutors plan and deliver learning activities that are effective in developing learners' knowledge and skills. Staff now use a range of teaching methods that closely meet the needs of learners. However, in a very small number of cases, tutors do not fully develop learners' independent learning skills. For example, when presented with a task, a few learners are provided with full instructions and guidance, but are not given the opportunity to explore the options of how to complete the task themselves.

How much progress have leaders made in ensuring that tutors accurately identify what learners can and cannot do and use this information to set appropriate learning outcomes that support them to make rapid progress?

Reasonable progress

Since the last inspection, leaders have implemented an online monitoring system which they use to gather evidence about learners' progress. All staff have received training in the effective use of the system so that they are confident in its use. They have been using the new system since the start of the academic year; however, it is too early to see the full impact.

Tutors assess effectively what learners can and cannot do in all key areas, such as communication, personal and social development and life skills, as well as in specific subject areas such as English and mathematics. They use the results of the assessments to set appropriate targets for learners that are linked to education, health, and care (EHC) plan targets. This ensures that there is an appropriate focus on supporting learners to make progress towards achieving their targets.

At the end of each day, tutors share relevant information about learners' progress with colleagues, including care staff working with learners in the residential facilities. This enables staff to adjust their lesson planning and activities accordingly and support learners effectively. In addition, staff meet weekly to discuss learners and collectively identify better ways of teaching and supporting them.

How much progress have leaders made in ensuring that tutors use assessment activities effectively?

Reasonable progress

Leaders now effectively monitor the information on the online monitoring system to ensure that staff are assessing learners' progress accurately and that learners are making progress towards their long-term EHC plan targets and their short-term subject targets. Managers use this information to intervene quickly to support staff when required.

Leaders and managers ensure that staff get to know learners well during the transition phases. Staff visit the learners in their care and educational settings and talk to parents, carers and other professionals. The information that staff gather from these activities enables leaders to make accurate decisions about whether they can meet the individual needs of learners. When they determine that they can meet learners' often complex needs, they use the information to develop an individualised curriculum to meet learners' long-term aspirational goals. This helps learners to make progress in preparing for adulthood.

Leaders and managers encourage staff to visit other colleges and schools to identify good teaching and assessment practice. Staff then share their new knowledge with

colleagues to improve practice across the college. All staff are encouraged to share ideas and proactively develop their practice.

How much progress have leaders made towards Reasonable progress planning a comprehensive personal development curriculum to ensure that learners understand what is meant by consent and healthy relationships?

Since the last inspection, leaders and managers have engaged the services of a specialist company to teach learners in an age-appropriate way about what constitutes a healthy relationship, using language that is accessible to learners.

Leaders have provided training to all staff to develop their approach to teaching about healthy and respectful relationships. They have appointed a subject lead for this area of work who has redeveloped the curriculum to include age-appropriate information. The new curriculum is already starting to have a positive impact. Both teaching and care staff work together effectively to enhance learners' understanding about healthy relationships, including sexual relationships. Staff start by developing learners' understanding of self-esteem, before moving on to friendships and more sensitive topics. Learners take turns and communicate effectively during sessions on these topics and demonstrate progress in improving their understanding.

Leaders and managers ensure that staff work closely with learners to keep them safe. They communicate effectively with non-verbal learners to understand how they are feeling and whether they are worried about anything at college, at home or in the community. Learners who can communicate verbally say that they would speak to staff if they felt unsafe.

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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