

# Croydon College

Reinspection monitoring visit report

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| <b>Unique reference number:</b> | 130432   |
| <b>Name of lead inspector:</b>  | Rebecca Jennings, His Majesty's Inspector                        |
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| <b>Type of provider:</b>        | General further education college                                |
| <b>Address:</b>                 | Fairfield Campus<br>College Road<br>Croydon<br>Surrey<br>CR9 1DX |

## Monitoring visit: main findings

### Context and focus of visit

This is the second reinspection monitoring visit to Croydon College following publication of the inspection report on 19 May 2023, which found the provider to be inadequate overall.

At the time of the monitoring visit, there were 2,653 learners aged 16 to 19 on study programmes. These were split across the two sites with 1,681 young learners studying vocational programmes at the Croydon campus, and 972 young learners studying at the Coulsdon campus. There were 2,702 adult learners and 263 apprentices studying at the Croydon campus. Of these learners, 227 were in receipt of high needs funding.

### Themes

**What progress have leaders, managers and governors made in making sure that young learners study and make expected progress across all aspects of the intended curriculum, including work experience?**

**Reasonable progress**

Since the previous monitoring visit, leaders have made suitable changes to make sure staff teach the intended content of the curriculum. They make sure managers and teachers check thoroughly the progress that young learners make through their programmes.

Tutors frequently assess what learners know and can do. For example, they give learners termly mock assessments and practice examination questions. Tutors mark learners' work appropriately against the course requirements using awarding body assessment criteria. They carry out termly progress reviews with learners where they discuss and set improvement targets. They put appropriate interventions in place if any learners do not make the expected progress. As a result, learners know what progress they are making and what they need to do to achieve their final assessments. Most learners who have taken examinations so far this year have achieved. Nearly half of the learners who took resits in mathematics and English GCSEs achieved grade 4 or better.

Governors work well with leaders to make sure that the quality of teaching continues to improve. For example, they regularly visit lessons to check on progress. As a result, governors are well informed about the content that learners study, and the progress they make.

In a very small number of instances, leaders have struggled to tackle staffing issues. Once staff were in place to teach all of the elements of level 2 information technology at the Croydon campus, they only had a short time to teach the course content. As a result, a few learners achieved lower grades than they were expecting

in their examinations. Managers have extended work submission dates to support sports learners at Coulsdon who are behind with their studies.

Since the previous visit, leaders and managers have raised the profile of work experience and work-related activity for young people. For example, they have introduced an employer forum which has increased their industry links and connections with employers. They have trained staff and invited guest lecturers to share information about working in different industries. As a result, most learners have either completed suitable work experience placements or have set plans in place. Learners with high needs complete work-related activities at the college, including various retail enterprises, but too few access external work placements.

**What progress have leaders and managers made in making sure staff teach a high-quality personal development curriculum where learners participate and are well prepared for life in modern Britain?** **Reasonable progress**

Leaders have designed a broad curriculum to help prepare learners for their next steps and for life in modern Britain. For example, learners improve their understanding of inclusivity by discussing how misogyny can be conveyed subtly through job adverts. However, a minority of learners already know the content tutors teach and do not learn new knowledge. In a few instances, learners use tutorial time to catch up with coursework rather than learn the planned content.

Since the previous monitoring visit, leaders have trained tutors on the topics they teach in tutorials, including the 'Prevent' duty. Leaders invite external speakers to teach topics where tutors do not have expertise. They signpost tutors to staff who do have expertise to get help if they need it. As a result, most tutors teach the personal development curriculum appropriately. However, a few are not confident to teach topics where they lack the necessary knowledge.

Learners cannot consistently explain how British values are relevant to their lives or articulate the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism. For example, learners at the Coulsdon campus can explain about different types of extremist groups and how to minimise the risk of being radicalised. A few learners at the Croydon campus have less secure knowledge of these topics.

Most learners value the range of activities on offer to explore their interests, including sports, animation and the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. Learners who go to debate club learn to appreciate and consider different points of view. However, many learners do not attend these activities due to additional responsibilities and timetable clashes.

Most learners have a sound knowledge of the various options available for their next steps and know where to get advice. Staff support learners well with university applications. Leaders have recently invested in a specific careers adviser to support learners with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). However, few learners had met with them at the time of the visit.

**What progress have leaders and managers made in making sure that staff teach a high-quality curriculum, and are skilled at setting and adapting specific targets for learners with high needs so these learners develop the knowledge and skills to achieve their goals, including their education, health and care plan (EHC) outcomes?**

**Reasonable progress**

Leaders and managers have recently redesigned the specialist curriculum. They rightly focus on developing employability projects and experiential learning across all areas. However, as many of these changes have been introduced mid-year, a minority of learners have not yet benefited from these positive changes.

Staff at all levels set high expectations for learners with high needs. They make sure that learners are actively involved in all aspects of college life. Leaders have invested in a range of new, high-quality, work-based employability projects, for example the college shop and a coffee delivery service. Learners very proudly take part in these activities. As a result, learners become more independent in accessing public spaces.

Leaders and managers have developed staff training on additional learning needs. They effectively share information about learners' needs with teaching staff. As a result, most teachers now feel more confident to put the right learning adjustments in place. However, a few teachers have not yet had appropriate training to help them confidently teach and support learners with high needs.

Leaders and managers have recently introduced new ways to check learners' starting points effectively at the start of their courses and link these to learners' EHC plan outcomes. However, these have not been rolled out for all learners. In a few instances, information about learners' English and mathematics knowledge is not used to effectively identify learners' starting points. As a result, a small number of learners do not benefit from a curriculum that is appropriately matched to their individual needs.

Leaders and managers have implemented a clear, structured approach to target setting for learners with high needs. However, this is not consistently applied across all areas. Subsequently, in a few instances, staff have not linked learners' targets to their EHC plan outcomes and baseline assessments well enough.

**What progress have leaders and managers made in improving behaviour and attendance and making sure learners feel comfortable when on campus?**

**Reasonable progress**

At the start of learners' courses, managers and tutors set very clear expectations about attendance and behaviour, including a three-stage process that staff follow if learners do not meet the college expectations of either attendance or behaviour. Staff draw up effective agreements and action plans for students. As a result,

learners understand the consequences of not attending college. However, at the time of the visit, too many learners had not improved their attendance enough.

Leaders have implemented effective strategies that have improved attendance, particularly at the Coulsdon campus. They share helpful information about attendance with parents and carers, and across departments. Leaders set clear targets for teachers about attendance to their courses. They reward learners who have high levels of attendance. During the monitoring visit, in most areas, attendance was in line with or exceeded college targets. However, attendance to tutorials during the visit was low and many learners were late to lessons.

Where learners do not attend, leaders and managers put appropriate support in place to help them to catch up on missed work, such as a dedicated room where learners can get additional support for mathematics and English. In A-level subjects at Coulsdon, learners appreciate that their tutors make resources available for them to catch up.

Learners feel comfortable at both campuses and report that the college is inclusive. They are confident staff would deal with any concerns about inappropriate behaviour promptly. They appreciate the visible presence of staff and security, for example when they arrive in the mornings at Coulsdon.

Most learners behave well in public spaces across both campuses. They are respectful to each other and teachers. Most learners organise their notebooks neatly and concentrate on tasks set by their tutors. However, in a few instances, learners do not take useful notes or work productively. In a small number of instances where learners' behaviour does not meet expectations, staff deal with this swiftly.

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