Newham College of Further Education

Monitoring visit report

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Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

On 1 November 2024, Newham College merged with Newham Sixth Form College (NewVIc). At their previous inspection in October 2022, Newham College was judged as good overall and making a strong contribution to meeting skills needs. In their most recent inspection in February 2024, NewVIc was judged as inadequate overall and making a limited contribution to meeting skills needs.

The monitoring visit took place at the newly merged college's NewVIc Sixth Form Centre. Inspectors selected themes for the visit from the areas for improvement identified in their previous inspection report.

At the time of the visit there were approximately 2,100 learners aged 16-18 attending NewVIc. Most learners studied A level, T-level or level 3 vocational courses, selecting from a wide range of subjects. Around 490 learners studied GCSE English and 590 learners studied GCSE Mathematics alongside their main programmes of study.

Themes

What progress have leaders made in improving the standard of teaching so that learners make good progress — **Significant progress**

Teachers and curriculum managers plan their curriculum well so that learners develop knowledge and skills incrementally and in the right order. For example, in level 3 art and design, learners learn skills such as drawing to scale in the early part of their course. Later they use their scale drawings to design and build extremely high-quality models to meet their project design briefs. Learners acquire the important skills they need for their qualifications and next steps quickly.

Teachers identify learners' starting points well. They use information about learners' prior attainment and initial assessments to set learners appropriate targets and adapt the way they teach. For example, in further mathematics A level, teachers give learners with high prior attainment challenging tasks. Where learners need more help, teachers support them with model answers and give learners more thinking time to answer questions. This helps learners to learn new knowledge or revisit prior learning at a pace that suits them and maximises their progress.

Teachers use suitable techniques to help learners remember new knowledge. They review prior learning at the start of lessons using skilful questioning and quick tests. This helps learners remember prior content and apply it to current learning. For example, in level 3 sport, learners recap their knowledge of sports leadership before

they move on to plan coaching sessions where they apply their leadership skills.

Since the previous inspection, the quality of feedback that teachers give learners has improved significantly. They give learners useful written and verbal suggestions for improvements. Learners respond well to feedback and their written and practical work improves rapidly.

Teachers and curriculum managers track learners' progress very well. They know which learners are making good progress and who needs some additional support. Teachers put in place suitable support to help learners improve their work. Learners at risk of falling behind have the same opportunities to learn and thrive as their peers.

What progress have governors and leaders of the merged college made in understanding the quality of provision and making sure that the curriculum meets local and regional skills priorities?

Significant progress

Governors and leaders have evaluated the strengths and weaknesses of the quality of their provision accurately. Their focus has rightly been on improving the quality of teaching. However, they also have firm plans in place for a NewVIc curriculum that will meet local and regional skills priorities. Leaders work closely with regional and local employer forums. For example, they attend events held by local chambers of commerce and NewVIc staff plan to attend established internal employer advisory boards. Curriculum managers and teachers have gained a greater understanding of the skills needs linked to their subject area and are already making informed decisions about the skills aspect of their curriculum design.

Since the previous inspection, leaders in many subjects have been quick to include the views of stakeholders and local employers in their curriculum design. For example, leaders set a live brief for vocational arts learners to design the branding for a local library renovation project, requiring that they meet the deadlines of the real-world project throughout. In English A level, learners benefit from talks by university lecturers about the ways that different academics analyse set texts. Through such activities, learners develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours they need in their future education and careers.

Since the merger in November, leaders and managers have been quick to share their expertise. They have put in place robust plans in place to support, monitor and track work experience, T-level industrial placements and employer activity. They have already put in place regular communication and meetings between the teams working on joint initiatives and this collaboration is having a positive impact on learners' experiences of the world of work. They now gain a sound understanding of what they need to do to succeed in their future education or career.

What progress have leaders made in providing appropriate training for staff so that they develop their expertise to teach learners effectively, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND)

Significant progress

Following the previous inspection, leaders and managers acted swiftly to create a highly effective package of professional development. They now identify and support those teachers and departments that need it most. Since the previous inspection, teachers in subjects with low achievement and attendance have had training in how to create a positive classroom culture, set high expectations and stretch and challenge learners. There has been rapid improvement in the quality of teaching and the learner experience.

Leaders have taken full advantage of expertise across the merged colleges to provide staff with an impressive range of appropriate training activities to help them teach learners with SEND. As well as college wide training, teachers can choose to attend specialist training that is most relevant to their own learners. For example, teachers have attended workshops by expert trainers about teaching autistic learners, learners with ADHD and dyslexic learners. This training has supported teachers to develop the skills they need to help learners overcome specific barriers to success.

A team of well-trained learning coaches work together very well to help teachers to improve their practice. For example, learning coaches talk through lesson plans and resources with teachers before lessons and review the lessons together afterwards. This helps teachers to become better and more confident practitioners.

Leaders have created a strong culture of continuous professional improvement. Staff are enthusiastic about the rapid improvement in the quality of the training that they have had since the previous inspection. They look forward to building connections across the merged college. In areas where this has already happened, such as foundation learning, teachers and learning support staff in different subjects and campuses visit each other's lessons and share good practice and new teaching techniques. Staff enjoy developing their expertise and they rightly note the considerable positive impact that this is having on their learners.

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