

Easton and Otley College

Re-inspection monitoring visit report

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Type of provider: Specialist college

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Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

This is the first re-inspection monitoring visit following publication of the inspection report on 20 July 2017. The inspection found the provider to be inadequate for overall effectiveness; quality of teaching, learning and assessment; personal development, behaviour and welfare; outcomes for learners; 16 to 19 study programmes; provision for learners with high needs; and adult learning programmes. The provider's effectiveness of leadership and management, and apprenticeship provision were judged as requiring improvement.

Themes

What actions have been taken to ensure that all safeguarding arrangements for all groups of learners are effective?

Since the inspection, leaders have responded well to ensuring that safeguarding arrangements are effective. The designated safeguarding lead and deputy leads have conducted appropriate further training on safeguarding. Almost all staff have completed the online safeguarding training. Leaders have promoted effectively the use of the college's virtual learning environment as one of numerous ways for learners to report any safeguarding concerns. Learners report that they feel safe and are safe. The proportion of learners accessing the college's counselling services has increased. Leaders have ensured that learners' tutorials now include a frequent emphasis on safeguarding and welfare issues. All full-time learners complete an induction training course on safeguarding, including the dangers of radicalisation and extremism, and online safety. The majority of learners demonstrate a good understanding of such issues. However, around a quarter of learners have not succeeded in demonstrating sufficient understanding of the dangers of radicalisation and extremism, and too many have not passed the online safety module. Safeguarding is now a fixed agenda item at governors' meetings, with a nominated governor holding lead responsibility for safeguarding matters. Leaders and governors report a range of actions to ensure the safety of learners living in the college's residential accommodation, but this accommodation was not specifically inspected during the inspection.

Priorities for improvement

- Ensure that all staff complete the online safeguarding training, and that managers assess the impact of such training and monitor its effectiveness.
- Make sure that all full-time learners acquire a good understanding of the dangers of radicalisation and extremism, and online safety. Ensure that part-time learners have a good understanding of the dangers of radicalisation and extremism and know how to keep themselves safe.

What actions have been taken to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment rapidly?

Too much teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement. When teaching is effective, such as in public services, sports and equine studies, teachers use their high levels of industry-specific knowledge and expertise to challenge learners to excel. These teachers devise good assessment tasks to extend learners' understanding and skills throughout the year. They use demanding questioning techniques that enable learners to consolidate their learning, develop their higher-level thinking skills and apply new knowledge confidently.

However, too much teaching, including of English and mathematics, lacks appropriate challenge to galvanise learners into making good progress from their starting points. Too many teachers do not provide teaching that meets effectively the needs of their learners. Many teachers provide tasks and activities that are solely aimed at the average ability of their learners and, as a result, too many learners fail to develop sufficiently their knowledge, skills and understanding. In too many instances, teachers accept learners' initial answers without seeking to extend their learning and reinforce theoretical concepts, and hone practical skills. Too many teachers move on to the next topic or aspect of a topic without ensuring that all learners have understood. Too often, learning support staff are either not clear about their role or provide too much help and do not enable targeted learners to think and learn independently. Not enough teachers provide specific oral and written feedback that informs learners of what they need to do to improve their work and make good progress. Too many learners do not know their targets and goals. Too few improve their understanding of relevant technical language. Too many learners, particularly those studying courses at level 3, do not take notes and/or collate their recordings coherently in lessons to enable them to reflect, revise and work effectively outside the classroom and workshop.

Priorities for improvement

- Urgently train teachers to:
 - provide demanding teaching that challenges learners to excel
 - provide specific feedback that enables learners to improve their work to high standards
 - improve their use of questioning and assessment techniques to extend learners' knowledge, skills and understanding
 - work effectively with learning support staff to help targeted learners to make rapid progress
 - set, monitor and evaluate challenging targets with their learners to ensure that learners are fully aware of their progress and what they need to do to excel

- make sure that learners record their learning and work independently both in and outside of lessons to consolidate their knowledge, skills and understanding.

What actions have been taken to ensure that the progress of learners and apprentices is monitored rigorously and that governors, leaders and managers understand accurately the strengths and weaknesses of the provision?

Since the inspection, leaders have produced a self-assessment report that is highly self-critical in highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of the provision. However, their comparison of college performance against that nationally, and also by similar colleges, is inaccurate. As a result, this impairs their understanding of the impact of the provision and outcomes for learners. Their quality-improvement plan is mostly robust and aligned to improving the identified weaknesses at inspection. However, leaders do not include any focus in their action planning to secure improvements in the progress that learners make against their starting points and targets. Attention is paid to increasing 'pass rates' only. Governors have increased their link visits to aspects of the college, including visiting lessons. However, governors' meetings and senior leadership team meetings pay little attention to the progress learners make. Governors, leaders and managers do not have an accurate understanding of the progress that all groups of learners make because too many teachers do not monitor and record effectively their learners' progress against initial and aspirational targets. The college's standardised tracking process is underutilised by too many staff. Too many learners are not aware of their targets.

Since the inspection, leaders have demonstrated their intent to improve teaching, learning and assessment by restructuring management tiers, increasing accountabilities and establishing clear, frequent reporting processes that place more emphasis on improving teachers' practices than previously. The innovation in learning adviser post has been integrated into the quality team in order to further improve teaching, learning and assessment. Leaders have established and recruited to the roles of advanced teaching and learning coaches to support staff and enable them to improve. Leaders have increased the number of advanced teaching and learning coaches to support and enable staff to improve. Currently, a total of 27 teachers are being supported. Leaders now ensure that findings of teachers' practices at observations help inform the performance management of staff.

Leaders have increased the frequency of observations and learning walks to ascertain the quality of teachers' practices. All teachers, trainers and assessors are set to be observed by the end of February 2018. Clear processes are in place to re-observe underperforming teachers and these are understood by staff. However, the college's observation process lacks rigour because too many observers are not sufficiently evaluative in their recordings. The recordings of too many observations are too optimistic, resulting in a high proportion of teachers' practices being judged to be good or better. Too few observers focus effectively on the impact of teaching, learning and assessment on learners' progress and outcomes. Following

observations, most subsequent action planning aligns to a limited number of identified weaknesses. Too much action planning does not focus on the specific aspects of teachers' practices that require improvement. Although there is a broad range of staff training opportunities available, leaders and managers do not ensure that training improves all aspects of teachers' practices. Managers' records do not record accurately the proportion of staff who attend each training event or demonstrate sufficient follow-up of the impact of such training. Moderation meetings to secure a robust observation process are not recorded. The findings of the frequent learning walks conducted by managers are not maximised to improve the practice of teachers who have been visited. Consequently, governors' and leaders' understanding of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is limited.

Priorities for improvement

- Ensure that observers focus accurately on judging the impact of teaching, learning and assessment on learners' progress and outcomes.
- Make sure that observations are followed up by specific actions that plan to rectify all identified weaknesses within an agreed timescale.
- Ensure that staff training improves all aspects of teachers' practices.
- Ensure that managers record accurately the proportion of staff who attend each training event and that the impact of such training is monitored and evaluated.
- Ensure that moderation meetings are robust and recorded to help secure a rigorous observation process.
- Make sure that the findings of learning walks help improve specific teachers' practices.

What actions have been taken to ensure that learners' attendance, punctuality and behaviour are good?

Leaders have established and recruited an attendance officer whose time is split between the two campuses. Learners who are absent at 9.30am each weekday morning are either contacted directly or via their parents/carers to establish the reason why. Leaders and managers use a 'live' data source to monitor up-to-date data on attendance and punctuality across the campuses. Overall attendance levels have increased from the same date the previous year. However, they remain below leaders' targets. There is high attendance in some subjects, for example engineering at all levels. However, attendance by learners is low in their English and mathematics lessons and very low in floristry and brickwork lessons. Leaders do not analyse learners' attendance at English and mathematics GCSE courses separately from functional skills courses. Adult learners' attendance is low. Leaders ensure that learners with identified mental health issues are provided with additional support from student services and 'college success' coaches, but their attendance is lower than their peers.

Throughout the monitoring visit, learners' behaviour was impeccable. They demonstrated a good level of respect for their peers and staff.

Priorities for improvement

- Ensure that the monitoring of attendance leads to appropriate interventions that effectively challenge all learners to attend their lessons and on time.

What actions have been taken to ensure that learners for whom the college receives high-needs funding receive high-quality teaching, learning and assessment?

Since the previous inspection, leaders and managers have introduced the recognition and recording of progress and achievement (RARPA) process to gauge learners' progress against short- and medium-term targets and goals. Staff now track and record the majority of learners' progress and achievements. However, too many learners have yet to benefit from such monitoring and demonstrate they are making good progress. Leaders and managers have set about ensuring that all teachers attend specific staff training to improve their practices, including the need to improve English and mathematics teaching. Teachers are now challenged and supported effectively by advanced teaching and learning coaches to improve their practices. Leaders and managers have established and appointed two enterprise coaches to promote learners' work-related and enterprise skills. All learners have access to internal work experience and enterprise activities across the campuses. Not enough learners have access to external work experience and supported internships with employers.

Priorities for improvement

- Ensure that all learners' progress and achievement against challenging targets are monitored and recorded.
- Increase the opportunities for learners to take up meaningful external work experience and supported internships with employers.

What actions have been taken to ensure that apprentices access high-quality and timely off-the-job training?

Since the previous inspection, leaders and managers have put in place a series of processes and staff training designed to improve the quality of off-the-job training. As a result, leaders' data forecasts that overall and timely achievement rates in the current year will be considerably above both national and provider-group rates. The college operates a three-model pathway for the provision of off-the-job training, dependent on the needs and working patterns of apprentices. One pathway is insufficiently planned to ensure that apprentices who learn remotely have sufficient opportunities to improve their English and mathematical skills. Two English and mathematics lead practitioners, one for each campus, provide some apprentices with targeted support and tuition to improve their English and mathematical skills both at

college and in the workplace. Leaders and managers do not collect and analyse the proportion of apprentices who achieve their functional skills qualifications the first time they take the examinations.

Leaders and managers have improved the amount of relevant information provided to employers. This includes a new 'employer progress report' that informs employers of the progress of apprentices who attend their off-the-job training at the college. Leaders' survey data highlights very high satisfaction rates from employers regarding the quality of the training provided by the college, a significant improvement on the previous year.

Leaders and managers have provided training for all staff on providing effective feedback to apprentices on the quality of their work and their progress. Leaders have established and recruited to an advanced practitioner post to bolster assessors' practices. Managers now ensure that all new apprentices' induction programmes include a mandatory focus on the importance of British values and the dangers of radicalisation and extremism. However, too many apprentices have yet to be trained and to develop a good understanding of such issues.

Priorities for improvement

- Ensure that all apprentices who learn remotely have sufficient opportunity to improve their English and mathematical skills.
- Make sure that apprentices have a good understanding of the importance of British values and the dangers of radicalisation and extremism.

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