

# Easton and Otley College

Re-inspection monitoring visit report

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**Unique reference number:** 10047126

**Name of lead inspector:** Matt Vaughan HMI

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**Type of provider:** Specialist college

**Address:** Bawburgh Road  
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## Monitoring visit: main findings

### Context and focus of visit

This is the third 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. The focus of this third visit was to judge, against the themes previously agreed, the progress leaders, governors and managers have made to improve the provision.

### Themes

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

#### **Significant progress**

Leaders now ensure that all safeguarding arrangements are effective. Teachers' and learners' use of potentially hazardous resources and materials on countryside management courses is secure, and managers record and monitor it rigorously. Leaders have taken fully into account the written advice provided by the external expertise who conducted a visit shortly after the most recent re-inspection monitoring visit. Leaders have recently revised the college's safeguarding policies, procedures and protocols to ensure that staff follow best practice in unerringly implementing safety procedures.

The majority of learners demonstrate a good understanding of the dangers of extremism. All full- and part-time learners have now completed an induction training course on safeguarding that includes appropriate promotion of online safety and the dangers of radicalisation. The majority of apprentices have completed this course and plans are in place to ensure that all do so.

Leaders have produced and promoted successfully an online film designed to help employers ensure that their apprentices understand the dangers of extremism. More apprentices have a better understanding of such issues than previously, but too many do not have sufficient awareness of why such concerns relate to their job roles in their workplace.

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

### **Reasonable progress**

Much stronger leadership of teaching and learning ensures that teachers are now clear about being held accountable for the progress and achievement of their learners. As a result, a greater proportion of teachers' practice is effective than previously. However, there continues to be much variability in the quality of teaching across the different subjects, and not enough is good or better.

Most teachers ensure that their learners understand the demands of the industries they aspire to work in and are motivated to develop adept practical skills. For example, teachers provide astute tuition and guidance to enable carpentry learners studying level 3 courses to construct staircases to occupational standards. Teachers pay careful attention and provide incisive feedback in helping equine learners become proficient in leading inexperienced horses to weigh-plates. Most vocational teachers promote successfully the value of mathematics in relevant industries, and as a result their learners are motivated to improve their mathematical skills. Where teaching is effective, teachers set high expectations and provide demanding tasks and activities that motivate their learners to make rapid progress. They use questioning and assessment techniques well to gauge learners' understanding, and a broad range of approaches to ensure that learners consolidate their knowledge and skills. Most learners find their assignment work both vocationally relevant and interesting. Teachers are keen to use the experiences of learners' work placements to bolster their theory teaching and inspire learners to improve their knowledge, understanding and skills. Teachers promote effectively the importance of health and safety in potentially hazardous industrial settings. More learners than previously arrive punctually at lessons ready to learn. Most learners now take notes and record their learning and understand the importance of working independently outside the classroom or workshop. Many learners voluntarily attended mathematics and English GCSE revision sessions that staff held during the Easter holiday period.

However, too many teachers focus solely on ensuring that their learners meet the minimum expectations of their qualifications and do not challenge learners to extend their higher-level thinking skills. As a consequence, many of the most able learners do not make the progress of which they are capable and few excel. Not enough teachers set their learners targets that demand them to work hard and achieve their very best. Too many targets lack specificity and are limited to the achievement of qualifications and not on improving learners' wider knowledge, understanding and skills. For example, teachers set learners targets such as 'become more confident' or 'develop exam technique' without further explanation. In lessons, some teachers do not set precise learning objectives that enable their learners to understand what they need to learn and improve. These teachers often do not check sufficiently learners' understanding before moving on to another topic. Too much theory teaching fails to ensure that learners grasp fundamental concepts and are able to apply these proficiently. Too many teachers over-rely on worksheet activities, which results in learners becoming bored and who then switch off from learning. A few teachers do

not work effectively with learning support staff to ensure that learners needing additional support make rapid progress. Some vocational teachers still do not promote the importance of English in their subjects or make sure that their learners augment such skills.

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

**Reasonable progress**

Governors' and leaders' plans to ensure that managers and teachers monitor the progress of learners and apprentices are now coming to fruition. At the end of the spring term, leaders secured their first robust set of data on the progress that all learners are making. Just over a half of learners make expected or better progress against their targets. Leaders expect that around three quarters of learners will achieve their qualifications in the current year. Leaders demonstrate a high degree of candour in accepting readily that this is not good enough. Their planned actions to improve the quality of provision are appropriate. Curriculum and quality managers work assiduously to ensure that teachers set learners challenging targets that they monitor and review regularly. These managers strive diligently to ensure that any learners struggling to make progress can catch up with their studies. During the Easter holiday period, staff attended cross-college training on setting high expectations of their own performance and that of learners. However, more work is required to ensure that more teachers demand the very best of their learners by challenging them to make good progress.

The records of governors' 'Curriculum Recovery Strategy' (CRS) group meetings now illustrate that they tenaciously challenge leaders on the progress that learners and apprentices make. As a result, governors have a good understanding of the college's strengths and weaknesses. Governors who attend the CRS group have an incisive grasp of what leaders need to put into effect to secure sustainable high-quality provision.

Leaders continue to implement a phased restructure of staffing and resources. Since the previous re-inspection monitoring visit, two new curriculum directors and two new full-time advanced learning coaches have started in post. Leaders and managers continue to manage performance robustly. A total of 34 teachers receive support from learning coaches and managers to improve their practice. Ten staff are working through the informal capability process to improve their teaching.

The observation process is now fit for purpose. Leaders and managers now ensure that most observers provide evaluative and accurate judgements on the impact of teaching, learning and assessment on learners' progress and outcomes. However, observers pay scant attention to the standard of learners' work and too many action plans lack specificity. Leaders and managers have observed more than four fifths of teachers' practice in the current year and they expect to observe all teachers

formally before the end of term. The level of scrutiny at moderation meetings continues to increase. The minutes of these meetings demonstrate that most aspects of observers' findings receive appropriate challenge. Leaders and managers continue to conduct frequent thematic learning walks to assess the quality of provision. They have introduced a 'calling card', identifying strengths and weaknesses that they feed back immediately to each teacher and the respective manager.

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

**Reasonable progress**

Leaders' and managers' monitoring, promotions and incentive schemes to increase learners' attendance are leading to sustained improvement in overall attendance. Leaders' data indicates a considerable increase in the proportion of learners who attend their lessons regularly. Leaders, managers and administration staff continue to conduct unannounced 'spot checks' to assess learners' attendance and punctuality. Leaders implement the formal disciplinary process with any staff who allow their learners to leave lessons early. Although the overall level of attendance remains below leaders' targets, more teachers challenge their learners to be punctual and attend regularly. Consequently, more learners now attend their lessons frequently than previously, and on time.

However, some teachers continue to finish their lessons early and, as a result, learners talk loudly in corridors, disrupting learning taking place in other classrooms. In other lessons, learners remain in the classrooms or workshops but prepare to leave far too early, having lost interest in the learning process. In a very few lessons, learners exhibit disrespectful behaviour to their teachers that inhibits the learning of others.

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

**Significant progress**

Teachers and support staff assess and monitor learners' progress effectively against precise and demanding targets that place good emphasis on learners' independent working and achievement. Staff make good use of learners' feedback to shape learning to meet their needs, interests and abilities. Teachers inspire learners to enjoy their learning, work diligently and make good progress. Teachers and support staff collaborate well to enable their learners to hone their writing and problem-solving skills. Teachers continue to make good use of a broad range of assistive technologies that enable all learners to participate fully in lessons. Learners studying on discrete courses at entry level 3 improve their understanding of the properties of compound substances, solutions and of the structure of plants through conducting experiments involving a range of scientific equipment at a science, genetics and microbiology research centre.

Learners on discrete courses develop their teamworking, communication and leadership skills through undertaking a series of work-related learning projects in local parks and wildlife nature reserves. Leaders and managers continue to build partnerships with employers and local authorities in order for learners to have purposeful external work placements and supported internships with employers in the 2018/19 academic year.

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

**Reasonable progress**

Leaders' data indicates that the proportion of apprentices who have completed successfully their programme in the current year is just below that of similar colleges. Their data indicates that not enough apprentices complete within their planned timescales, with a significant proportion having exceeded their scheduled end dates without achieving. However, managers and training coordinators now implement appropriate intervention actions to ensure that apprentices make quicker progress and complete their programmes successfully in a timely fashion. Leaders' data shows that around three quarters of apprentices are on track to complete on time.

The quality of off-the-job training of apprentices varies considerably, and most training coordinators set high expectations and effectively challenge apprentices who learn on college campuses. These training coordinators use an array of resources, deploy good questioning and explanation and provide insightful feedback to motivate their apprentices to make good progress. However, not enough apprentices who study their off-the-job training remotely improve their knowledge, understanding and application of underpinning theory. Too many training coordinators set apprentices narrow targets that focus solely on the minimum competences needed to achieve their qualifications and do not challenge apprentices to reach their potential. Leaders use some of their Department for Education 'Strategic College Improvement Fund' resources to improve the quality of English and mathematics provision for apprentices. The majority of apprentices improve their English and mathematics skills, but too many studying English functional skills at level 2 do not achieve their qualification at the first attempt. Most apprentices attend their off-the-job training regularly.

Managers provide relevant staff training to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Since the previous re-inspection monitoring visit, the newly appointed advanced practitioner for apprenticeships has led training for training coordinators on conducting effective reviews of apprentices' progress and also on providing good feedback. Two thirds of training coordinators study a teaching qualification at level 3.

Managers and training coordinators ensure that employers contribute to the planning, monitoring and evaluation of apprentices' learning. Most employers

frequently submit progress updates of their apprentices to the college's electronic monitoring system. Recently, a total of 45 employers attended a series of training events aimed at developing their mentoring skills in order to support apprentices.

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