

Redcar and Cleveland College

Re-inspection monitoring visit report

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Name of lead inspector: Malcolm Fraser HMI

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Type of provider: General further education college

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Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

This is the second re-inspection monitoring visit to Redcar and Cleveland College following publication of the inspection report on 16 November 2017 which found the provider to be inadequate overall. The effectiveness of leadership and management and outcomes for learners were also judged inadequate. The quality of teaching, learning and assessment, and personal development, behaviour and welfare were judged as requires improvement. The inspection graded three provision types: 16 to 19 study programmes; adult learning programmes and apprenticeships. All three were judged as requires improvement.

Themes

What has been the impact of the actions that leaders and managers have taken to tackle the weaknesses identified at the inspection?	Significant progress
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In the six months since the last inspection, leaders, including the principal of Stockton Riverside College, have transformed the ethos of the college. They have engendered a renewed confidence, enthusiasm and belief in the college's future direction among managers and staff. The determination and actions of governors, leaders, managers and staff to make rapid improvements and to ensure the college's sustainability have already had a demonstrable impact on improving the quality of provision and outcomes for learners. Leaders and managers are not complacent; they recognise fully that, although they are making rapid progress towards achieving their goals, there remains much to do.

Leaders and managers have very recently introduced more rigorous performance management arrangements that make teachers more accountable for the quality of their teaching and their learners' achievement. While these new arrangements are already having a positive impact, leaders and managers recognise that they need further refinement to make teachers more accountable for the current progress of their learners. Enhanced quality improvement arrangements include more accurate evaluations of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and the identification of more specific actions for improvement following lesson observations. Leaders and managers identify, with increasing accuracy, areas of underperformance and act swiftly to tackle the most significant weaknesses. These improvements have resulted in much better learner retention this year compared with the same point last year and higher-quality teaching in many areas. Leaders and managers recognise that, although their actions have led to improvements in attendance and in the quality of English and mathematics provision, further work is needed to reach the college's targets in these areas.

Leaders have taken many other actions to tackle weaknesses and to develop the college's responsiveness and resilience. They now place a very strong focus on

developing learners' awareness of the risks of radicalisation and extremism. Learners are now much more aware of these risks and how to keep themselves safe. Leaders and managers work closely with employers, the local authority and the Tees Valley combined authority to develop the curriculum to meet local needs. Current work includes increasing the volume of apprenticeships in areas identified as local priorities. They are also developing lower-level study programmes that focus on individual needs and prioritise progression to higher-level programmes and apprenticeships. Leaders have also provided coaching for managers to improve their skills, capacity and resilience during this period of rapid and significant change for the college.

Leader and managers monitor closely the progress that they are making in tackling the weaknesses identified at the last inspection. They have made improvements to the post-inspection action plan following the last monitoring visit. The revised plan is clear and comprehensive, with well-defined actions and success criteria. Leaders monitor and evaluate progress towards their targets frequently. They accurately identify that they are on target to achieve most of the actions identified in the plan.

The actions that leaders, managers and staff have taken to turn the college around are being increasingly recognised by the local community. The current number of applications for places at the college in 2018/19 has improved compared with the same point last year.

How effectively do governors use relevant information to hold leaders to account for the college's performance?

Significant progress

The operation of the governing body has been strengthened further since the first monitoring visit. The board continues to meet every two weeks and maintains a strong focus on improving the experience and success of current learners and the college's future. Board agendas cover appropriate issues including recruitment, quality, performance and the progress made towards the proposed merger with Stockton Riverside College. Minutes of recent board meetings demonstrate that governors provide effective oversight and strong support and challenge for leaders. Governors regularly receive and discuss the most recent review of progress against the post-inspection action plan and hold leaders to account for the rate of progress in making improvements.

Since the first monitoring visit, leaders have improved significantly the quality and presentation of reports that governors receive. Reports are written clearly and include all relevant supporting information. The content of the reports is clearly and helpfully cross-referenced to priorities in the post-inspection action plan. Authors of the reports, who are primarily college managers, now present the reports at board meetings, enabling governors to engage directly with the managers responsible for the topics under consideration.

Governors are highly committed to the college and to ensuring its future sustainability. They are actively involved in preparation for the merger, while maintaining a strong focus on current learners. They have recently enhanced further their awareness of the college's work by accompanying managers on learning walks where they visit lessons and meet with learners.

What steps have leaders and managers taken to ensure that the provision can be sustained and developed further? Significant progress

Plans for the college to merge with Stockton Riverside College in August 2018 are well advanced. The merger aims to ensure the continued existence and planned growth of Redcar and Cleveland College, as part of a larger college. The principal of Stockton Riverside College has been working closely and successfully with leaders and managers at Redcar and Cleveland College to drive improvements and lead the merger strategy.

Internal and external communication about the proposed merger has been innovative and effective and has ensured that staff and members of the local community are fully aware of the rationale and potential benefits. A consultation on the merger proposal is currently being carried out. Leaders have engaged fully with a wide range of stakeholders, including employers, schools, the local authority and the Tees Valley combined authority, to secure support for the proposed merger. A strong commitment exists in the college and in the local community to ensure the existence of a sustainable and high-quality college in Redcar. The college continues to benefit from exceptional financial support to enable it to operate up to the point of the proposed merger.

What actions have leaders and managers taken to ensure that learners and apprentices recognise and understand the risks of extremism and radicalisation and know how to protect themselves from these risks? Significant progress

Since the first monitoring visit, leaders and managers have continued to take very effective action to ensure that staff and learners now have a good awareness about the risks of radicalisation and extremism. Managers ensure that all new learners receive training, including through taking an online course, as part of their induction to the college.

Leaders and managers have established effective links with local safeguarding and counter-terrorism professionals and use their expertise to inform college safeguarding strategies and ongoing training for staff. College staff now discuss with confidence issues related to radicalisation and extremism with learners, linking this well to the local context of Redcar and the Tees Valley in general. Consequently, learners have good knowledge about different forms of extremism, how to recognise the warning signs in others and the action they should take if they have concerns.

What has been the impact of action that managers have taken to increase the proportion of learners who stay on their programmes, attend well and make good progress towards achieving their qualifications? **Reasonable progress**

Since the first monitoring visit, leaders and managers have maintained a strong focus on implementing actions designed to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. They have prioritised improvements to the areas of most urgent need. The impact of the actions taken is leading to improvements in the progress that learners make and the outcomes that they achieve. Leaders and managers monitor closely their progress in bringing about improvements, recognising rightly the further work required.

Learners behave and apply themselves well in their learning activities. The ongoing reinforcement of the attendance policy, introduced in September 2017, has resulted in higher attendance this year compared with 2016/17. However, attendance remains below the target of 90% that leaders set for the college. The introduction of a 'red card' lateness procedure at the beginning of March 2018 has had a significant early impact on improving learners' punctuality to lessons. Leaders and managers recognise that they need to keep the process under review to ensure that they can justify its benefits to adult learners, some of whom have expressed negative views. They need also to ensure that the process does not disrupt the start of lessons.

Leaders and managers have successfully implemented a range of actions to improve the proportion of learners who remain on their programmes. They use the recently introduced management matrix to make teachers much more accountable for aspects of their course delivery. In addition, managers have strengthened the procedures for identifying learners with persistently poor attendance and those at risk of leaving the college. Additional support is provided swiftly for these learners to help them to overcome the barriers that they are experiencing and re-engage in their learning. As a result of these actions, there has been a marked improvement in the proportion of learners of all ages who have been retained on their programmes compared with the same time last year.

What have leaders and managers done to ensure that learners make good progress in developing their English and mathematics skills? **Reasonable progress**

Leaders and managers responsible for English and mathematics provision have continued to implement a range of robust actions that have led to an improved proportion of learners making good progress in developing these skills. Leaders' self-assessment of the progress that they have made in improving provision in English and mathematics is accurate and circumspect. They recognise that due to the low starting position, there remains much to do. Although reasonable progress has been made in improving the quality of provision and outcomes for learners in both subjects, learners make better progress in English than they do in mathematics. The

proportion of learners who have already achieved functional skills qualifications is much higher than it was at the same point last year. Managers now track learners' progress closely against all aspects of their English and mathematics qualifications and put additional support in place for learners who require it.

Leaders and managers have high expectations of staff and set these out clearly. They continue to provide effective support and challenge through staff training and performance management arrangements for English and mathematics teachers to help them to improve their practice.

Most vocational teaching staff now reinforce well to their learners the importance of attending and achieving in English and mathematics. These staff are now held to account for their learners' attendance at English and mathematics lessons through performance reviews. Learners' attendance at English and mathematics lessons has continued to improve during this academic year. However, attendance rates remain well below those of learners' main subject areas.

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