

The Learning and Enterprise College Bexley

Monitoring visit report

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Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

The Learning and Enterprise College Bexley was inspected in January 2018. At that time, inspectors judged the overall effectiveness of the provision to require improvement.

The focus of this monitoring visit was to evaluate the progress that leaders and managers have made in addressing the main areas for improvement identified at the last inspection.

The Learning and Enterprise College Bexley is a community learning and skills provider and is part of the London Borough of Bexley. It offers a range of courses for adult students, of which half lead to qualifications. These courses include English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), information, communications and technology programmes, professional qualifications for health and social care and GCSE English and mathematics.

Themes

What impact have leaders' and managers' actions had in increasing the proportion of students who achieve their qualifications, including in English and mathematics? Insufficient progress

The proportion of students who complete courses leading to qualifications has increased but is not yet high. The new principal and his senior leadership team have taken decisive action to remove underperforming provision, while finding students suitable alternative providers so that they can complete their qualifications. For example, the few remaining students studying hairdressing and barbering programmes have transferred to an alternative local provider of good-quality hairdressing provision.

The proportion of students achieving functional skills levels 1 and 2 in mathematics, and functional skills level 2 in English remains low. Students studying functional skills English and/or mathematics at entry level have high achievement. The proportion of students who achieve a grade 4 and above in GCSE English and GCSE mathematics is high.

A high proportion of students complete their community learning programmes, enabling them to develop useful skills and expertise.

How useful is the information managers provide senior leaders about key areas of performance, such as the progress of students and the proportion of students achieving their qualification? Reasonable progress

At the time of the previous inspection, senior leaders had insufficient information to monitor and evaluate students' progress and were unable to accurately predict students' achievement. As a result of much work, managers have access to accurate and timely data reporting. They use this confidently to review students' learning and attainment.

Leaders have set clear expectations for a high-quality student experience and have communicated this effectively to teachers and staff. Leaders work successfully together to ensure that managers focus closely on learning and improving the student experience.

Managers have improved financial reporting and their understanding of budgetary constraints. They work to cost individual programmes accurately. As a result of recent training, they manage their budgets effectively.

Leaders and managers work with local partners, employers and community stakeholders to re-evaluate the current curriculum offer so that it meets their learning, skills and health and well-being requirements.

What impact have leaders' and managers' actions had in supporting tutors to improve their practice? Reasonable progress

Managers have used the findings of the last inspection and their own observations of learning to prioritise the key improvements required to ensure that teaching, learning and assessment are at least good. This resulted in a clear set of priorities that informed the extensive professional development teachers undertook during the summer term. It is clear that teachers use this training in practice. They focus on the progress individual students make in lessons. They use a range of appropriate strategies to enable students to measure their own improvement accurately. For example, in a garment-making class, the teacher skilfully analysed individual students' progress by looking at photographs of earlier work. The teacher then discussed how the students had used their learning to improve the fit and cut of garments, as shown in their current work. Teachers are keen to explore different techniques to engage students more actively in their own learning and development.

Managers correctly recognise that they need to be more specific in the developmental feedback they give teachers, following observations of learning. This is to enable teachers to improve and extend their own skills and practice.

Do tutors set sufficiently detailed and challenging learning targets for adult students on community courses not leading to qualifications?

Reasonable progress

After the previous inspection, managers re-evaluated how teachers recognise and record students' prior learning and how they set and record meaningful learning with students. On courses not leading to qualifications, teachers practise their recent training by setting students more precise individual and group targets. This enables students to develop and improve their skills. This allows students and teachers to measure individual progress more accurately.

Teachers set students effective targets and use them to measure students' progress and to discuss with students the skills they are developing. Students enjoy reviewing and evaluating their progress. Students who had previously studied at the college accurately reflected that the revised learning plans were easier to use to record their aspirations and were useful in clarifying the progress they were making.

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