

Southampton City College

Report following a monitoring visit to a 'requires improvement' provider

Unique reference number: 130696

Name of lead inspector: Kate Hill, Her Majesty's Inspector

Inspection date(s): 22–23 October 2019

Type of provider: General further education college

Address: St Mary Street
Southampton
Hampshire
SO14 1AR

Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

Southampton City College was inspected in December 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 previous inspection.

Southampton City College is a small general further education college serving the city of Southampton. The college provides a wide range of post-16 education and training, including 16 to 19 study programmes in a variety of vocational areas, adult learning programmes and apprenticeships. The vast majority of the college's learners come from areas of the city with higher-than-average levels of deprivation. Educational attainment in the region is lower than other parts of the country and around three quarters of all students coming to the college study either an English or mathematics GCSE. Around two thirds of learners study vocational courses at levels 1 and 2. At the time of the visit the college had around 1,150 16- to 18-year-old learners and 2,100 adult learners. Around 400 apprentices currently study on a mixture of framework and standards apprenticeships.

Themes

How much progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring students learn more, understand more and achieve their qualifications? Reasonable progress

Since the previous inspection more learners remain on their courses, complete their studies and achieve their qualifications. Leaders and managers have taken effective actions that have led to this improvement. They improved the information, advice and guidance learners receive to make sure that learners are on appropriate courses. Leaders and managers make sure that teachers monitor carefully the progress that learners are making so that they support them if they fall behind.

Leaders and managers have made changes to the curriculum to meet employers' needs better and to give learners the best opportunities to succeed. For example, managers in motor vehicle redesigned the curriculum to give learners the opportunity to develop more practical skills. They invested in new, industry-relevant and useful resources. Learners enjoy the more practical curriculum and develop new knowledge and skills that the industry needs. The number of learners achieving their qualifications in motor vehicle has improved considerably and is high.

Leaders and managers have taken a number of effective actions to improve attendance across the college. These include the introduction of attendance and

retention officers who report on absences to curriculum managers. They make daily phone calls to absent learners and chase up persistent absentees.

In a small minority of courses achievement rates remain too low. Leaders and managers have identified the reasons for this and started to bring about improvements. It is too early to measure the impact of these actions.

Achievement rates for marine apprenticeships declined in 2018/19 and were very low. Leaders and managers have since replaced the member of staff that unexpectedly left. However, it is too early to measure the impact of this.

What progress have leaders and managers made in improving the quality of education to make sure all students and apprentices develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours they need? Reasonable progress

Learners now benefit from being taught by well-qualified industry experts. Teachers complete annual industry updates to ensure that their skills remain current. They attend training events to learn about new and emerging technologies. For example, those teaching on motor vehicle improve their knowledge about electric and hybrid cars. Employers work closely with teachers and managers to plan units of work which are most beneficial for learners and apprentices.

Teachers in motor vehicle and hairdressing have a clear rationale for the order in which they teach the curriculum. They consider carefully the order of the activities they teach to make sure that learners develop the knowledge and skills they need. For example, learners and apprentices start their courses learning about health and safety and applying them in hair salons and garages. Consequently, learners describe confidently what they have previously learned and remembered. They are able to apply their knowledge to new practical tasks or assessment activities.

Teachers in motor vehicle and hair have improved their use of questioning techniques to help learners recall information and build on previously taught key concepts and knowledge. For motor-vehicle learners this is often fast-paced to mimic the speed of recall that learners require when answering the multiple-choice exam papers for their qualification. A small minority of teachers do not check learners' understanding well enough or make sure that learners have grasped new knowledge sufficiently well.

Hairdressing apprentices benefit from well-considered, time-specific targets linked to their jobs to develop their knowledge and skills further. For example, they research images of knots, rolls and pin curls and then improve their skills by practising these hairstyles after preparing hair with a wash and blow dry.

Teachers and tutors do not reinforce the importance of developing good English skills for work. They do not correct learners' mistakes in their written work and because of this they continue to repeat the errors.

What progress have leaders and managers made in improving the quality of feedback that students and apprentices receive so that they can improve their work? Insufficient progress

Leaders and managers have worked closely with teachers to improve feedback to learners but progress has been too slow. Staff mark and return written work promptly but their feedback lacks detail and is too complimentary. It does not highlight what learners need to do to improve their work further. Staff include too many positive comments when work is incomplete or very brief.

Learners in motor vehicle benefit from helpful and timely oral feedback in practical sessions from teachers and technicians. Motor-vehicle staff use effective questioning to encourage learners to solve problems themselves. Learners reflect on their own mistakes so that they know how they can improve.

Too many learners present work poorly. Staff do not encourage and motivate learners to improve their spelling and grammar. The quality of work they display on classroom walls is low and consequently does not set a good example to help learners improve.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2019