

Telford College of Arts and Technology

Re-inspection monitoring visit report

Unique reference number: 130796

Name of lead inspector: Tracey Zimmerman HMI

Inspection date(s): 26-27 April 2017

Type of provider: General further education college

Address: Haybridge Road
Wellington
Telford
Shropshire
TF1 2NP



Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

This is the second re-inspection monitoring visit to Telford College of Arts and Technology following publication of the inspection report on 14 June 2016, which found the provider to be inadequate overall. The focus of this second visit, some nine months after the first, is to judge, against the themes previously agreed, the progress leaders, governors and managers have made to improve the provision.

A new interim senior leadership team was appointed in December at the recommendation of the Further Education (FE) commissioner. A new principal has recently been appointed to come into post in May 2017.

Themes

The fitness for purpose of and the progress towards meeting the outcomes of the post-inspection action plan.

Reasonable progress

Leaders and managers have maintained a clear and effective focus on achieving targets set in the post-inspection action plan (PIAP). Planning for improvement following the previous inspection was initially based on seven themes identified in the inspection report, but leaders have rightly expanded the focus of the PIAP to take in additional events and priorities that concern the FE sector. These include, for example, measures to meet responsibilities under the 'Prevent' duty, and measures to improve learners' achievements in English and mathematics.

Senior leaders delegate responsibility for managing work towards PIAP targets to project leaders. These are generally middle managers in the college. Such delegation has two benefits: first, it ensures good involvement of middle managers and staff teams in improvement work; second, it ensures the sustainability of improvement work through project teams after current interim leaders have left the college. Project teams' work is subject to good levels of oversight from senior leaders. Project leaders receive good support from senior managers. Senior leaders and governors review progress towards PIAP milestones frequently. To date, good progress has been made in achieving target milestones within the expected timescales. However, as many of the PIAP final objectives relate to matters such as student retention and achievement, work towards these is yet to show full impact.

What progress has been made to ensure that the governing body has sufficient expertise and experience to oversee improvements? **Significant progress**

Senior leaders have made very rapid progress in appointing new governors with relevant skills and experience to provide support and challenge to their work in securing improvements to provision. In this process, they have received very effective support from the clerk of the governors.

Since the previous inspection, five new governors have taken up post, all of whom have skills and experience that qualify them well for work on the board. They have skills and experience in running national and medium-sized businesses, financial enterprises, and higher and further education institutions. All the new governors are involved fully with the work of the board. They are taking part in link-governor and other activities. All new governors have received a good level of training that allows them to oversee, challenge and advise senior leaders well.

What have senior leaders done to ensure governors have an accurate picture of the performance of the college in regard to learners' progress and achievements? **Reasonable progress**

Senior leaders now provide governors with a good level of reliable and accurate information about college performance. All governors have access to a data dashboard that provides them with detailed information about, for example, retention, achievements, and attendance by course, the timeliness of apprentices' reviews, and the progress learners are making towards functional skills and GCSE qualifications in English and mathematics. Governors also make use of a smaller dataset of key performance indicators that highlight trends in major areas such as retention and attendance for the whole college to date. Governors can access data updated daily at home or in the college; as a result, governors make frequent reference to this data before and between meetings so that they are well informed about progress and able to contribute fully to discussions, holding leaders to account for any poor performance.

Most governors link with departments in the college, and meet with heads of department to review progress and improvements and to discuss any difficulties staff face. Governors also accompany heads of departments on 'learning walks' so they better understand the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in the college. Governors received good levels of training before they began these activities. Heads of department, teachers and other staff value the improved contact they now have with governors.

Although governors have an improved understanding of the higher-level data relating to college performance, and a much better understanding of the sorts of activities learners take part in, they have yet to gain a secure and detailed understanding of the progress learners make during lessons, though work is underway to improve this.

How effectively are managers tackling underperformance across the college?

Reasonable progress

Leaders have taken good steps to increase the accountability of teachers and other staff, and they have been resolute in tackling those who cannot or will not improve performance for learners' benefit. Senior staff have been highly successful in maintaining and enhancing the morale and motivation of the vast majority of staff, and have ensured that all staff understand clearly the institutional expectations of them.

Underperforming teachers have received good levels of one-to-one support work, and many have become more effective classroom practitioners as a result. Staff in non-teaching roles have also received good levels of coaching, mentoring and support to improve their performance. Where staff do not or will not engage with support and improvement work, senior leaders have taken firm action. Such staff have left the college or been placed on performance and capability plans.

Heads of department who directly line-manage staff receive very good support from senior managers, and highly effective specialist support and advice from colleagues in, for example, human resources, management information and finance. Heads of department are confident and aspirational in their work as a result.

While significant levels of underperformance have been swiftly and effectively dealt with since the previous inspection, senior leaders have yet to reliably improve the day-to-day work of all teachers to ensure that all lessons meet individual learners' needs, so that they are able to meet their potential. Not all teachers are yet planning successfully to stretch and challenge the most able learners, nor are they ensuring fully effective learning for the least able in classes. Senior leaders acknowledge the need to raise the expectations, standards and aspirations of such teachers further.

What interventions have been put in place to ensure apprentices make more rapid progress and achieve their qualification within their timescales?

Significant progress

Assessors now manage the whole process of the apprenticeship journey, using more precise pre-entry criteria, guidance and initial assessment to ensure that apprentices are on the correct programme to meet their future career aspirations.

Managers and assessors are monitoring the progress of each apprentice now and they know what each individual needs to do to complete their programme of study. Frequent meetings between managers and assessors ensure that they identify actions to speed up apprentices' progress when necessary. They are placing a greater emphasis on improving employers' engagement in the monitoring and reviewing of the progress of each apprentice; as a result, they can provide support that is more effective. Some employers are accessing online portfolios, with the

permission of the apprentice, to ensure that their work relates directly to their qualification needs.

At the time of the monitoring visit, the college's data indicates that the proportion of apprentices who will complete their qualification on time is on track to rise considerably this year.

Managers identified that apprentices were not being introduced to functional skills until the end of their programme, which meant that they were not knowingly practising these skills throughout their apprenticeship. Assessors now embed English and mathematics throughout the apprentices' programme from the start, using reviews to reinforce these skills – even for those who are exempt from taking qualifications. Specialist staff support those apprentices who require additional help to develop these skills so that they can achieve the requirements of their qualification.

However, currently too many assessors do not give apprentices clear targets on what they need to do next or to do better. As a result, too many apprentices still are not completing their apprenticeship on time.

What has been done to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across all subject areas, including discrete English and mathematics provision?

Reasonable progress

Managers have recently carried out observations of sessions throughout the college and have produced action plans for each member of staff. Teaching and learning coaches are supporting teachers identified as needing to improve their practice, and these teachers have additional plans from their coaches. Coaches undertake developmental observations to check that practice has improved. Formal re-observations have yet to take place; managers acknowledge that the gap to re-observation is too long and will be revising this practice next academic year.

Managers implemented a series of professional development activities for staff around teaching and learning. Information gained from learning walks and observations informed these subjects. Teachers could clearly articulate how the training had improved their practice within the classroom.

A new management team is in post to support the English and mathematics provision. They ensure that teachers plan sessions to meet the needs of their learners. Currently, English GCSE sessions are streamed to provide additional examination support for the learners. A new hub for English and mathematics is being well used now to provide additional support to learners. Learners stated that English and mathematics have a much higher priority now and they all understood the importance of attending these lessons. As a result, attendance has improved. Managers have identified that they need to integrate English and mathematics better throughout all the curriculum areas.

Curriculum managers and teachers now have access to a data dashboard so that they know how their learners are progressing. Managers and teachers have monthly meetings to discuss every learner to ensure that they are progressing as expected.

Do all staff have high expectations and ambitions for learners? Are lessons challenging, inspiring and meeting the needs of all learners? Do teachers provide clear and meaningful feedback that helps learners to improve? Do teachers set and monitor challenging targets, which enable learners to achieve their potential? **Insufficient progress**

Progress coaches are in place to support those learners identified as being at high or medium risk of not completing their qualifications. Learners appreciate this support and current evidence shows that more learners are staying on programme. Managers acknowledge that these learners are not being sufficiently stretched to reach their full potential.

Leaders and managers have clearly articulated the importance of attendance and punctuality to learners. Attendance has increased slightly this year, and managers are monitoring this closely in weekly meetings.

Too many learners during the visit were not engaging in their lessons. Too many were not ready to learn, with headphones in, hats on, no paper or pen, and were not taking part in the lesson. Teachers were not using information on individual learners' starting points and progress to plan these lessons sufficiently. Teachers are not encouraging learners to think and learn independently and therefore not preparing them for their next education step or career goal.

Too many learners did not know what they needed to do next or how to improve their work further. Where teachers had set goals and targets, too often they did not check that learners had met them, and as a result the learners were not given credit for their achievements.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

Learner View

Learner View is a website where learners can tell Ofsted what they think about their college or provider. They can also see what other learners think about them too. To find out more go to www.learnerview.ofsted.gov.uk.

Employer View

Employer View is a website where employers can tell Ofsted what they think about their employees' college or provider. They can also see what other employers think about them too. To find out more go to www.employerview.ofsted.gov.uk.

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 looked after children, 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 www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

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 2017