Barnet and Southgate college

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

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Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

Barnet and Southgate College was inspected in December 2018. At that time, inspectors judged the overall effectiveness of the provision to require improvement. All provision types and key judgements were judged to require improvement, with the exception of apprenticeships, which were judged to be good.

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.

Themes

What impact have leaders' and managers' actions   Significant progress
had on ensuring students develop deep and
secure knowledge?

Since the previous inspection, and following the retirement of the previous principal and chief executive officer, governors have taken the opportunity to restructure the college at leadership level. They have appointed a new chief executive officer and created a new post of college principal. The latter has accountability for raising standards of teaching and learning.

Leaders and managers have worked highly effectively to improve teachers' skills in the classroom. Their aim has been to put the passion back into teaching. To do this, they have provided extra support to teachers through well-planned and effective individual coaching. They have also overhauled the quality assurance and performance management process, with a strong focus on supporting teachers through personalised professional development. Teachers enjoy trying new approaches to teaching, and they share their experiences at weekly training sessions and through peer observations. Leaders and managers have a constructive relationship with another further education provider to share best practice in teaching. As a result of the range of improvement activities implemented, teachers are becoming more skilled in the classroom.

Teachers support students skilfully to develop knowledge which is secure. For example, in childcare teachers are adept at explaining to students the differences between analytical and synthetic phonics. This means that students know why the latter is now used over the former, when teaching children to read. In science, teachers explain the calculation for density to students. This leads to students being able to calculate the density of regular shapes to irregular shapes.

Teachers sequence lessons effectively. They plan lessons in order that students develop their knowledge progressively. Teachers challenge students to recall what they have learned. Where students' knowledge is not secure, teachers provide further instruction to ensure that students understand the topic. Students receive useful feedback on their work so that they know how to make improvements. As a

result of effective teaching, the proportion of students who achieved their qualifications in 2019 increased compared to the previous year.

What impact have leaders' and managers' actions   Reasonable progress had on improving student attendance?

Leaders and managers have taken positive actions to improve students' attendance at the college. They recognise that students' attendance is linked to their motivation to learn and how interesting their lessons are. Therefore, leaders' and managers' efforts have focused on improving the quality of teaching.

In addition to improving teaching, leaders and managers have taken practical steps to ensure that there are now clear expectations around attendance. For students under the age of eighteen, staff ensure that absent students, and their parents or guardians, receive immediate notification of any concern. Regular reports on attendance are also sent to parents or guardians. Inspectors found that students are clear about the expectations on them regarding attendance, and how to report if they are unable to attend. Where students were absent from lessons, most teachers knew the reasons why. Staff actions are starting to have a positive impact on the attendance at lessons.

Students' attendance is high on their main courses, such as A-levels or vocational subjects. It is not high enough on English and mathematics courses. Leaders and managers are aware of this and are taking action, but it is too early to determine the impact of this.

Leaders and managers have recently introduced individual attendance targets for each department within the college. Staff monitor student attendance against these targets frequently. Where departments look as if they are not going to achieve their targets, suitable interventions are put in place.

What impact have leaders and managers had in   Significant progress improving the quality of subcontracted provision?

Since the previous inspection, leaders and managers have been very successful at improving their management of subcontracted provision. They have continued to reduce the number of subcontractors in order to provide better oversight and support for providers who are able to provide a high-quality experience for apprentices and adult learners. Subcontractors are fully integrated into the college and its quality improvement processes, rather than being managed at arm's length.

Leaders and managers now focus their subcontracting activities on providers who meet the college's strategic curriculum intent. Subcontractors deliver courses which support students who would not normally access the college. This includes courses for those who are unemployed so that they develop the skills that employers need, or for individuals for whom English is not their first language. As a result, students in the local area are supported well to improve the quality of their lives and go into work.

Since the inspection, leaders and managers have quickly and successfully shifted their focus from checking subcontractors' compliance with quality systems, to closely scrutinising the quality of provision at these providers. For example, college managers undertake observations of lessons and follow up on actions for improvement. In addition, subcontractors' own staff now regularly attend meetings and training at the college. As a result, college leaders and managers have a good understanding of the quality of the subcontracted provision.

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