

City of Bristol College

Progress monitoring report

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Name of lead inspector:	Ann Monaghan, Her Majesty's Inspector
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Type of provider:	General further education college
Address:	St George's Road Anchor Road Bristol BS1 5UA

Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

City of Bristol College was last inspected in November 2019. At that time, inspectors judged the overall effectiveness of the provision to require improvement.

This monitoring visit focused on the extent to which leaders and those responsible for governance are taking effective action to provide education and training in the current circumstances. It was undertaken as outlined in the [operational note on visits carried out from January 2021](#) and with reference to the further education and skills handbook.

These visits are to help learners, parents, employers and government understand how providers are meeting the needs of learners in this period, including those with high needs and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Following changes to government guidance and the imposition of COVID-19 (coronavirus) lockdown restrictions, inspectors carried out this monitoring activity remotely. As a result, the range of evidence available to inspectors was narrower than would be the case during an on-site inspection. Therefore, this report provides a more limited level of assurance.

The impact of COVID-19 has been taken into account in the findings and progress judgement below. Inspectors did not evaluate leaders' response to COVID-19 during the spring and summer of 2020, when the provider was not open to all learners and there were no national expectations regarding remote education.

Theme

What progress are leaders and those responsible for governance making to ensure that staff teach a curriculum and provide support to meet learners' needs, including the provision of remote/online learning?

Reasonable progress

Governors and senior leaders have initiated a number of changes to improve the quality of education for students and apprentices. They have worked with college managers to establish a culture of openness and accountability. They have made reasonable progress in most of the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection.

Governors have improved how they support and challenge college leaders. They now have a better understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the college. They have introduced two 'task and finish' groups, each charged with the oversight of

three recommendations for improvement from the previous inspection. These groups review senior leaders' detailed reports about the extent of improvement. Governors visit lessons and talk to students and staff. This helps them to gain a deeper understanding of the quality improvement journey.

Leaders and managers have introduced a range of initiatives to develop the effectiveness of staff teams, including a management development programme, a mentoring scheme for new teachers and an increase in staff for the safeguarding and student support teams. Managers have started to help teachers to improve how they plan and teach the curriculum. However, they recognise rightly that a minority of teachers require more training and support to improve.

In particular, managers have provided initial training for most teachers on the technical and teaching skills they need for remote learning. Many teachers are now using such skills effectively. For example, in psychology, teachers use live explanations, the 'chat' facility, videos and break out rooms effectively to keep students interested and participating in their learning. Photography teachers have adapted practical projects and introduced online video demonstrations to help students develop their practical skills.

Managers are fully supportive of the change in college culture, which makes them responsible for quality improvement in their own areas. For example, managers and teachers on A-level courses have improved their provision through skilful planning of the curriculum and good use of assessment. English language teachers have brought the topics of diversity and change in language together to make the learning experience more coherent. Sociology and psychology teachers teach students the skills needed to write well and improve their essay structure. Students' learning improves as a result of teachers' concise and helpful feedback.

Students studying catering are able to explain enthusiastically what new skills they have learned since starting their course. For example, they have developed effective communication skills, safe handling of plates and trays for table service, as well as being more organised in managing their workload. Teachers have revised the content of the catering curriculum and teaching and learning activities to improve students' confidence and English and mathematics skills.

Apprentices also benefit from improvements to the quality of their education. They spoke of their new learning and how it was helping them at their workplace. For example, construction apprentices developed a scale model of a typical roof construction at college before using this learning to build full size elements on site. Employers confirmed that they were involved in aligning apprentices' on- and off-the-job learning. However, tutors do not correct apprentices' basic spelling, punctuation and grammar errors and, as a result, apprentices do not improve these essential skills.

A few managers do not focus sufficiently on improving the quality of education in the subjects for which they are responsible. For example, there is still significant inconsistency in the planning of the curriculum and teaching of business studies at level 3. Consequently, some students have only a superficial knowledge of business, while others

can confidently apply business theory and concepts. Teachers do not ensure students in this subject have a firm understanding of the underpinning mathematical knowledge and skills required for their learning.

Improvements to the teaching of English and mathematics have not been fast enough. Managers have focused more on processes such as enrolment and attendance monitoring rather than providing the training for teachers to improve their teaching of the curriculum, including when teaching remotely.

Students and apprentices feel safe and well supported by staff. They know who to contact if they have concerns. Staff have increased the amount of contact and support for younger and/or more vulnerable students and improved their links with parents and carers. Students and apprentices explained how the support from staff and the online training they had completed helps them to work safely online.

Leaders and those responsible for governance should take further action to:

- ensure that the pace of improvement is accelerated to improve the quality of education in all subjects
- provide all teachers with the training and support they need to further develop their teaching skills and keep up to date in their subject
- implement their English and mathematics strategy so that all students can continue to develop these skills in specialist lessons and in their wider learning.

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