

Leeds College of Building

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

Unique reference number:	130542
Name of lead inspector:	Jacquie Brown, His Majesty's Inspector
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Type of provider:	General further education college
Address:	North Street Leeds LS2 7QT

Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

Leeds College of Building was inspected in March 2024. 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 resolving the main areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection.

Themes

How much progress have leaders and managers made in improving the attendance, punctuality and readiness to learn of students on study programmes. Significant progress

Leaders and managers have been relentless in tackling poor attendance. They have introduced a range of highly effective strategies to improve attendance and punctuality. They have implemented a less punitive approach to attendance management, introducing rewards for high and improved attendance. Managers and staff use a series of interventions to explore attendance issues with students and to ensure the right pastoral support is in place to help those with poor attendance back into learning.

Leaders and managers have made very sensible changes to timetabling to encourage good attendance and punctuality. They have timetabled English and mathematics lessons around vocational classes. They ensure that refectories close before the start of lessons to encourage students to move promptly to their classes. Tutors set high expectations of attendance and punctuality and tackle all lateness to encourage improved punctuality and readiness for work. Students fully understand the expectations upon them to attend well and on time.

Leaders and managers work closely with parents and carers to involve them in attendance monitoring. They start by setting clear expectations during enrolment. Senior leaders then maintain frequent contact with parents and carers. They send letters with quotes from local employers about the importance of turning up to work to highlight the impact that poor attendance can have on their young person's studies and future.

The actions that leaders are taking are helping students on entry-level and level one courses to make substantial improvements to their attendance. A significant proportion of these students who miss lessons have complex reasons for being unable to attend, with many students having had a history of poor attendance at

school. They often have complex social, emotional and mental health needs or caring responsibilities that require careful management.

How much progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that apprentices who require English and mathematics qualifications achieve these in time to progress to end-point assessment? **Significant progress**

Leaders and managers have implemented a comprehensive strategy to improve their oversight of functional skills for apprentices. They have centralised the management of these subjects and invested in a dedicated coordinator role. Each faculty now has a dedicated apprenticeship curriculum manager. The coordinator works closely with curriculum managers to ensure regular monitoring of apprentices' progress takes place. Managers have introduced an escalation process so that apprentices who are late in entering the gateway are immediately identified.

Tutors use recap activities well at the start of English and mathematics lessons to check what apprentices have remembered. They explain information clearly and use effective questioning to check apprentices' understanding. In mathematics, tutors break down calculations into small steps to help apprentices understand how to solve the problem. Apprentices value the online resources they are given access to in sessions, which helps them to address gaps in their knowledge by reinforcing their understanding and providing opportunities to practise calculations.

Managers respond swiftly if apprentices fail their functional skills examinations. They quickly organise further training and resit examinations. The proportion of apprentices who pass their English first time is improving. Leaders and managers are aware there is more work to do to improve the proportion of apprentices who pass mathematics first time. A very small number of apprentices who have passed their end date have not yet passed functional English and/or mathematics. Staff have put appropriate interventions in place to support them.

How much progress have leaders and managers made in improving their oversight of provision to gain assurance that students and apprentices are making good progress? **Significant progress**

Leaders and managers have successfully restructured their performance management arrangements for curriculum areas to strengthen their oversight of the quality of the provision. Curriculum managers are held to account for the quality of education they provide and the progress of students and apprentices in their faculties. Leaders take a forensic approach to meetings and ensure any actions they set are swiftly followed up.

Leaders and managers have increased the size of the quality team. This provides increased capacity for the team to carry out quality assurance activities in teaching,

learning and assessment and to review the progress made by students and apprentices. Members of the quality team use the outcomes of their activities to provide support to staff and to organise relevant training for teachers.

The newly formed quality and curriculum committee provides valuable oversight on the quality of education and the progress made by students and apprentices. The committee includes governors with extensive experience and expertise in quality assurance and in teaching and learning. They carefully scrutinise information and data provided by senior leaders and challenge leaders and managers about their actions.

Leaders and managers have introduced a valuable 'students at risk' week. During this week, curriculum managers and staff focus on students and apprentices who are at risk of leaving the course or not achieving it. They discuss students' barriers to learning and ensure that interventions are put in place to support students and apprentices to succeed.

Leaders and managers have improved the data they use to monitor students' and apprentices' progress. They compare performance against other construction providers to benchmark their provision and identify where improvements are needed. Leaders and managers have introduced a valuable functional skills dashboard for apprentices, which tracks apprentices' progress in each faculty.

Leaders and managers carefully monitor the impact of the strategies they have put in place. The proportion of students and apprentices who achieve their qualifications has increased significantly.

How much progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that students on study programmes benefit from meaningful encounters with the world of work?

Significant progress

Leaders and managers have completed a comprehensive review of how they approach work experience and facilitate meaningful encounters between students and the world of work. They have visited other providers to look at best practice and used what they found to create a sensible action plan. They monitor the implementation of the plan at their frequent meetings with curriculum managers.

Leaders and managers have increased the capacity and resources in the partnership and skills team to improve engagement with key stakeholders. They have employed additional careers and employability officers to develop relationships with employers and other key stakeholders to increase work-related learning opportunities for students.

Leaders and managers have successfully raised the profile of employer engagement in curriculum areas. They have significantly improved communication between the partnership and skills team and curriculum areas through attendance at termly

performance reviews and curriculum team meetings.

Leaders and managers have implemented an effective system for tracking students who complete work experience and other work-related activities. Employability officers create reports to allow leaders and managers to identify which students have completed a work placement or work-related activities and which ones need more support.

Students benefit from meaningful encounters with the world of work. They visit workplaces, including construction sites, to get a better understanding of what it is like in the workplace; employers come into college and work with students on projects, help them with their CVs and hold mock interviews; and employers talk to students about what they are looking for in applicants. Where appropriate, students complete external work placements.

Students develop a range of valuable employability and essential skills they need to successfully gain employment. Many students have low starting points in terms of attendance, punctuality, confidence and communication skills. Staff and employers work hard with students to improve these and get them ready for the world of work.

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