

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



3 March 2016

Ms Diane Grannell
Principal
The Bournemouth and Poole College
North Road
Poole
Dorset
BH14 0LS

Dear Ms Grannell

Short inspection of The Bournemouth and Poole College

Following the short inspection on 10–11 February 2016, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the college was judged to be good in March 2011.

This college continues to be good.

Students and apprentices continue to experience good education and training. The majority of students make good progress on most courses. The number of students, particularly adult students, gaining their qualifications has risen since the previous inspection. The proportion of students progressing into higher education from access to higher education courses is high.

Pass rates of students on functional skills mathematics and English declined in 2013/14. The proportion of apprentices on a few apprenticeship programmes who did not gain their apprenticeship within the agreed timescales also declined. Leaders and managers took swift and appropriate actions to remedy the decline, such as improving the quality of staff and resources which led to improvements in 2014/15.

Well-planned programmes of study for students aged 16 to 19 prepare them appropriately for life and work in modern Britain. Many gain valuable additional work-related qualifications such as food hygiene and first aid and acquire sound acumen in helping them manage their finances. The college's Job Shops provide good practical advice and help to students who gain up-to-date and relevant information about progression options, as a result.

Students benefit from good resources and equipment, and a modern, professional campus at the Poole site as a result of a successful building programme and

refurbishment since the previous inspection. The building programme was undertaken to support and match the revision of the curriculum that caters well for local needs and national priorities in providing a good range of relevant apprenticeships and vocational courses. The Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Centre and Care Innovation Centre provide relevant, innovative courses and resources.

Leaders and managers have successfully introduced study programmes with clear commitment to the principles of providing students with personalised programmes. The range and take-up of enrichment opportunities is good in most areas. Students receive good careers advice and guidance and, as a result, their progression to further appropriate courses or apprenticeships is also good.

Not enough students achieve their functional skills qualifications in English and mathematics. The teaching of mathematics does not engage students; they are not suitably prepared or motivated to take an active part in lessons.

The new senior leadership team has a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the college. Leaders have demonstrated this in a forthright and concise self-assessment of the college, supported by a well-considered and realistic college improvement plan. They have already taken appropriate actions to tackle weaknesses with rigour and paid careful attention to securing improvement.

Governors support and challenge the senior leadership team effectively. They listen carefully to students' views and respond positively and decisively. They have good insights into where teaching and learning are good and where they require improvement, backed up by their regular visits to curriculum areas and reports on how students perform.

Safeguarding is effective.

Students feel safe at the different college sites and know how to keep themselves safe and how to report concerns. The governing body, senior leaders and managers ensure that arrangements for safeguarding, including training, are effective and up to date. The safeguarding team works closely with the college's Wellbeing Services and makes sure that vulnerable groups of young people receive the right support. Managers have responded very responsibly and appropriately to the increase in numbers of students with mental health difficulties and have provided them with excellent support.

Staff know their responsibilities, and most have now undertaken appropriate training, to enable them to protect students from the risks of extremism. Students have been actively involved through their tutorials or participating in, or viewing, a college-produced play exploring the issues of being marginalised in today's society.

Inspection findings

The following findings relate to the key lines of enquiry identified before the inspection.

- Senior leaders have now established a clear line of management accountability for the teaching of English and mathematics across the college with the appointment of a new director and two senior managers for English and mathematics. The introduction of a whole-college assessment strategy, the use of students' feedback to make improvements to how and when these subjects are taught and improved use of information from pre-course assessments are improving the management and teaching of English and mathematics.
- Teaching on GCSE English and mathematics courses is much more effective this year than previously, as a result of good training for teachers and classroom support staff. Improved resit results in GCSE English and a small improvement in GCSE mathematics demonstrate early impact. However, the teaching of functional skills mathematics is still not good enough.
- A new cross-college marking scheme is providing clear and helpful guidance to teachers, most of whom routinely check students' spelling. As yet, they are not as rigorous in correcting more general errors in grammar and sentence construction. Although students know the grades they are working towards in their examinations, not enough are clear on what they must do to achieve these grades.
- A revised system for observing teaching, learning and assessment, although relatively new, deals well and quickly with underperformance. It is leading to improvements by highlighting the most effective teaching practices and habits of successful teachers and pointing out areas for improvement. For example, observations show that areas for teachers to improve are managing group work, whole-class discussions and presentations.
- Several well-considered initiatives have improved the sharing of good practice across the college. Regular peer support and peer observations of good teaching and learning practices, an annual staff conference to highlight what has gone well in teaching, and the support from senior practitioners have improved teachers' skills.
- A range of initiatives has raised standards and expectations and led to students performing more effectively on level 3 courses. These include a more structured induction process and stronger focus on target setting, closer monitoring of students' progress in tutorials and more thorough examination preparation. Students receive good individual help from learning coaches in lessons.
- Work experience is integrated well in curriculum areas such as hair and beauty, and health and social care. A central work experience team with good

expertise in working with employers has recently been set up and has improved student participation in work experience. It ensures placements are safe and that employers understand the college's expectations for students. The team is now making a positive contribution in curriculum areas where work experience has not traditionally featured strongly, such as construction and A levels. A higher proportion of students than in previous years is now undertaking work experience and improving their skills for employment.

- Ensuring consistently high attendance is still an area where the college has not met its own target. Absences and lateness are followed up rigorously and routinely but current measures still do not ensure all students attend punctually.

Next steps for the provider

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- all students receive effective and engaging teaching of functional skills and GCSE English and mathematics to improve the proportion who achieve their qualifications in these subjects
- students improve their attendance at lessons across all areas of the college by maintaining the current rigorous follow-up procedures.

I am copying this letter to the Skills Funding Agency and the Education Funding Agency. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Peter Green

Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three Ofsted Inspectors were assisted by the college's vice-principal as nominee. We met with you, governors, members of your leadership team, managers, teachers and students. We carried out observations of lessons with students and apprentices. We scrutinised key strategic and policy documents, including those relating to quality assurance, safeguarding and the college's performance. We also analysed data on students' achievements and students' progress relative to their starting points. We also analysed feedback from students and employers, gathered during the inspection and from Ofsted's online questionnaires.