

South Hampshire College Group

Monitoring visit report

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Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

South Hampshire College Group formed in August 2023 through the merger of Fareham College, Southampton City College and Eastleigh College. The college has four campuses across Hampshire.

The college teaches 3,876 students taking mainly vocational education programmes for young people at a range of levels. In addition, the college teaches adult learning programmes to 6,381 learners. The largest adult learning provision is in foundations for learning and life. There are a further 1,660 apprentices, of whom 817 are aged 16 to 18. Apprenticeship standards taught include areas such as installation and maintenance electrician and carpentry and joinery. There are 154 students in receipt of high-needs funding.

This monitoring visit took place to evaluate the progress that leaders, managers and governors have made in merging the three predecessor colleges to establish a shared vision and create an effective management and governance structure as South Hampshire College Group. The visit also focused on areas for improvement from the former Eastleigh College and Southampton City College sites. These colleges were graded as requires improvement in their previous inspections.

Themes

What progress have leaders, managers and governors made in merging City College Southampton, Fareham College and Eastleigh College to establish a shared vision and create an effective management and governance structure as South Hampshire College Group?

Significant progress

Leaders and governors established a clear vision and purpose for the merger of the three predecessor colleges. They engaged in extensive consultation with staff and a wide range of other stakeholders. Staff and middle leaders are very positive about the management of the process. This is because of the work undertaken to align work and curriculum areas before the merger. Staff welcome the fact that leaders seek their views. There has been an exceptionally smooth transition into the new college group.

Leaders review the curriculum effectively across the group. They are establishing centres of excellence to remove the duplication of geographically close provision. Centres of excellence will operate in new industry standard and well-resourced teaching spaces. This development is being managed effectively. Leaders clearly communicate their plans to students. Staff are already working together as single teams ahead of the move, so that they work together more effectively.



Leaders have established a highly effective leadership structure across the group. There are clearly defined roles for group and campus leaders. Executive and senior group leaders rotate around the three campuses. This is popular among staff. Staff feel that leaders are highly visible.

Leaders make sure that there are extensive opportunities for staff to work together across the campuses. For example, as early adopters, staff from Fareham College are sharing approaches to planning and teaching T-levels with staff from the other campuses. They share effective practices and resources. This continuously improves the quality of the provision.

Leaders have taken very sensible and proportionate steps to align systems and processes. They made decisions about which systems had to change before the merger, retaining others to make sure there was no unnecessary disruption. For example, in tutorial provision, local responses are different, but tutorial themes are now the same across the campuses. As a result, staff feel that systems are coming together well, and these help them to be effective in their roles.

What progress have leaders and managersSignificant progressmade in improving the quality of apprenticeshipprovision at the former Eastleigh College site?

Leaders have very effectively restructured apprenticeship provision to improve quality. They have appointed new apprenticeship leaders who have an excellent understanding of the strengths and areas requiring development of the provision, and have made substantial progress in making improvements.

Staff use assessment very effectively to adapt and tailor their teaching to meet apprentices' needs. For example, trainers in level 2 carpentry set additional assignments in curved wood for those apprentices who have additional experience, so they extend their skills and knowledge further.

Staff and mentors at work train apprentices highly effectively. They present information clearly and demonstrate practical tasks skilfully. For example, mentors on electrical standards continuously demonstrate electrical tasks, such as changing distribution boards. When they assess that apprentices are ready, they allow them to perform the same process under supervision. Consequently, apprentices produce work of a high standard, as well as making a valuable contribution to their workplaces.

Staff provide apprentices with useful feedback on their work. This includes targets in workbooks, and verbal evaluations of their written and practical work. As a result, apprentices understand what areas they are performing well in and are clear about the areas they need to develop further. Apprentices produce high-quality work.

The vast majority of employers receive very regular and detailed updates of apprentices' progress. Employers take an active role in progress reviews. As a result,



mentors and employers more effectively understand how to support apprentices with their apprenticeship work.

Staff engage very effectively with employers in deciding what is taught on apprenticeships. For example, in level 3 carpentry, staff have added computer aided design (CAD) lessons at the request of employers. Apprentices are being trained well for their job and future careers in the industry.

Leaders have improved support for apprentices who fall behind. They now more frequently hold review meetings to track apprentices' progress so they can set targets to help them to stay on track. As a result, the vast majority of apprentices who fall behind catch up.

What progress have leaders and managers
made at the former Eastleigh College site in
making sure that they have sufficient oversight
of the whereabouts and well-being of looked
after children and care leavers?Significant progress

Since the previous inspection, leaders and managers have made considerable improvements to their monitoring and oversight of looked after children and care leavers. They have appointed a highly knowledgeable designated teacher (DT) who very effectively supports care-experienced students with their studies. Where students are at risk, the DT rapidly checks on their well-being and whereabouts. Leaders and managers work very well with social workers, the virtual school and other agencies. Together, they monitor the progress and well-being of students. They make sure that students are set useful goals in formal reviews of their progress to support them to make progress and achieve their potential.

What progress have leaders and managers made in continuously improving the quality of education at the former Southampton City College site?

Significant progress

Leaders have taken swift and effective action to considerably improve the quality of education at the former Southampton City College. Leaders identify clearly how teachers can improve their teaching. They focus training and coaching on these areas. In addition, all new staff complete a specially designed induction. This focuses on the fundamentals of high-quality teaching and learning. As a result, staff continuously improve their teaching and assessment skills.

Teachers plan learning effectively to help students to increase their knowledge. For example, on motor vehicle courses, students learn about the foundational content related to basic servicing. Over time, they build on this by moving on to learn about the different gearbox types and their functions. As a result, learners can complete tasks and move on to topics that increase in complexity over time.



The merger means that leaders are able to invest more in high-quality resources to support effective teaching. For example, in hairdressing staff ensure that students are working on appropriate training head blocks. They also use salon quality hairdryers when learning about blow-drying techniques. As a result, students are learning in classrooms that replicate industry.

Teachers use highly effective teaching strategies in lessons. For example, teachers recap previously taught content prior to examinations. In marine engineering, learners work through multiple-choice quizzes based on topics from earlier lessons. Learners develop specialist knowledge that they can remember over time, and they are well prepared for their assessments.

Teachers provide clear, useful and timely feedback in practical sessions. For example, in level 2 culinary skills, teachers give students very clear feedback on how to improve the quality of their dishes. Students know that producing a thinner batter will improve the texture of their battered fish. Consequently, students know how to improve the standard of their work.



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