

South Hampshire College Group

Monitoring visit report

Unique reference number:	130693
Name of lead inspector:	Mike Finn, His Majesty's Inspector
Inspection dates:	18 and 19 April 2024
Type of provider:	General further education college
Address:	Bishopsfield Road, Fareham, Hampshire PO14 1NH

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.

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.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2024