

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
[www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)



29 March 2018

Ms Marie Gilluley  
Principal and Chief Executive  
Kirklees College  
Manchester Road  
Huddersfield  
HD1 3LD

Dear Ms Gilluley

### **Short inspection of Kirklees College**

Following the short inspection on 7 and 8 March 2018, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The inspection was the first short inspection carried out since the provider was judged to be good in November 2012.

#### **This provider continues to be good.**

You, governors and the college leadership team have ensured that, since the last inspection, the college has maintained the good quality of provision and outcomes achieved by students and apprentices. You are not complacent about the areas for improvement that still remain. Leaders identify these accurately in the college's self-assessment and intervene quickly to bring about improvements where needed. They identified the reasons for a decline in quality in some key aspects of the college's provision that led to a deterioration in the outcomes for students between 2014 and 2016, and implemented actions to bring about improvement. For example, they strengthened quality processes and increased the frequency of reviews of students' and apprentices' progress. As a result of leaders' actions, achievement rates on vocational and functional skills qualifications improved markedly in 2016/17. Achievement rates on the apprenticeship programme improved and remained high, other than at one subcontractor where they declined.

You, governors and leaders rightly recognise that the college's current financial circumstances present a significant risk to sustaining the current high quality of provision. The college is in the early stages of a very challenging process as you work with the Further Education Commissioner and the Education and Skills Funding Agency to find financial solutions to secure the long-term sustainability of provision at the college. So far, you have ensured that the financial circumstances of the college have not had a negative impact on the quality of education and training or the range of programmes available. Furthermore, you have continued to commit additional resources, where deemed necessary, to resolve weaknesses in provision. For example, you have established a new team to engage with employers and

manage work placements to increase the proportion of students on 16 to 19 study programmes who undertake meaningful work experience. As leaders and governors develop and implement the challenging plans to improve the college's financial situation, it is imperative that you retain your focus on, and commitment to, providing high-quality programmes that meet the needs of students, apprentices, local communities and employers.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Governors, leaders and managers ensure that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and that appropriate action is taken to safeguard all students. The head of student support, her two deputies and the cross-college team of progress coaches ensure that the safeguarding of students and apprentices has a high profile across the college.

All staff receive regular and comprehensive briefings and training on safeguarding, including mandatory training on child protection and the 'Prevent' duty. As a result, staff understand how to recognise indicators of concern relating to students' and apprentices' safety and well-being and the risks of potential radicalisation. They promptly refer any concerns to the college's safeguarding team using well-understood reporting mechanisms.

When safeguarding concerns are identified, the safeguarding team maintains detailed confidential records of actions taken. The team uses its excellent links with a wide range of specialist agencies and local partners well to support and deal with safeguarding concerns. College leaders and safeguarding managers are well represented on local safeguarding and counter-terrorism groups. They use these forums to inform effectively both college and local strategies for safeguarding communities and individuals.

### **Inspection findings**

- Leaders and governors remain focused on ensuring that the college provides a broad vocational curriculum that meets the needs of the local community, employers and students. As part of their plan to reduce costs and following consultation with staff, leaders are about to implement a comprehensive staff restructure. Governors and leaders are optimistic that this will make the college more financially efficient while maintaining the focus on sustaining high-quality provision.
- Having evaluated that adult learning provision required improvement, leaders moved the large majority of this provision into a single department. This has been successful in providing more effective oversight of the quality of the provision and students' progress and achievement. Managers now quickly identify courses where achievement is too low and take effective action to improve it.
- Adult learning provision offers good opportunities for students to gain the skills that they need for employment and to make positive contributions to their families and wider communities. Adult students who study alongside younger students on study programmes receive the same level of tutorial support as their

younger peers. As a result, an improved proportion of adults are making good progress from their starting points. A higher proportion of adult students on functional skills courses and on courses in English for speakers of other languages remain on their programmes compared with the same time last year. However, the proportion of adult students who have left their GCSE English and mathematics courses early is too high, and attendance on these courses is low. Around a quarter of the destinations of adult learners remain unknown when they leave their programmes. Leaders and managers acknowledge that they need to improve the information that they collect about the destinations of adult students.

- The management of study programmes is good. Managers take effective action to improve aspects of study programmes that require improvement. For example, investment in the management of work placements has resulted in a significant increase in the number of students carrying out valuable work experience. Leaders and managers recognise, however, that they need to increase the number and range of work experience places further.
- A key priority for leaders and managers is to improve the progress of students on study programmes. Teachers assess students' progress towards their targets frequently. Gold, silver and bronze standards have been introduced to raise the aspirations of students taking accredited qualifications in which only a pass grade is possible. Most students on study programmes now make at least the expected progress, and often better than expected progress, in their vocational subjects. Teachers plan activities to improve students' English and mathematical skills well in their lessons. Progress coaches support students well during tutorials to evaluate and record the work-related skills that students have gained and need for their planned next steps.
- Leaders and managers have prioritised improving students' attendance on study programmes this year. They recognise, however, that the actions that they have taken so far have not had the intended impact. Although attendance has improved in a few subject areas, in too many it remains at the same rate and in a few cases slightly lower than it was at this point last year. Attendance at English and mathematics lessons is particularly low. Managers and teachers have had more success in identifying those students at serious risk of not achieving through poor attendance. They ensure that staff take swift action to support these students to re-engage in their learning.
- Specialist English and mathematics teachers are well qualified in their subjects. The decision by managers to locate these teachers in subject teams has been very effective. The profile and importance of these subjects have been raised across the college as a result. Specialist staff give good support to teachers of vocational subjects to integrate English and mathematics more effectively into their lessons. Students on study programmes now make much better, and often significant, progress in improving their English and mathematical skills and levels of attainment. However, the proportion of students who achieve high grades at GCSE, although improving, is still not high enough.
- Leaders and managers were quick to identify the underperformance of the college's largest subcontractor, Norton Webb, and intervened effectively to

improve its performance. Managers at the subcontractor responded well to the college's intervention; they analysed accurately the reasons for the decline in achievement rates, and acted promptly to improve them. Managers at Norton Webb have instituted more rigorous assessments of apprentices' starting points to ensure that apprentices can meet the demands of higher level qualifications. They carry out due diligence checks on employers to assess their financial health so that apprentices are not placed with employers who may be at risk of closing. They have remodelled the delivery of programmes so that apprentices complete the more challenging aspects earlier. As a result, the great majority of current apprentices with the subcontractor are making good progress.

- Leaders and managers ensure that all students and apprentices benefit from high-quality careers advice and guidance. The college is making good progress in ensuring that its careers programme complies with the Gatsby benchmarks. Staff ascertain students' future progression and career aspirations early in their programme and review these regularly in tutorials. Students and apprentices have good access to independent careers advice provided by specialist staff. They can access a wide range of support in, for example, preparing a curriculum vitae and job applications to help them to gain employment. Students' awareness of career options available to them is informed well through a wide range of guest speakers and employer visits that form part of students' enrichment programmes.
- Students and apprentices follow programmes that link well to local employment opportunities. Students who are considering leaving their courses early are encouraged to participate in the 'swap don't drop' programme. This enables them to consider alternative subjects if they find that these better meet their long-term plans. A high proportion of students who complete their study programme progress to positive destinations. Managers carry out subsequent checks to confirm whether these students have remained on their courses, apprenticeships, or in employment when leaving the college. However, they do not analyse sufficiently whether actual destinations relate to students' intended career destinations identified at the start of their programmes, or use this information to evaluate the effectiveness of careers guidance.

### **Next steps for the provider**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- while implementing the significant actions that they need to take to resolve the college's financial situation, they maintain their strong focus on providing high-quality provision leading to positive outcomes for students and apprentices
- students' attendance improves on the courses where this is not yet high enough, particularly on study programmes and in English and mathematics
- the college builds on the success it has already achieved in increasing the availability of meaningful external work experience places so that all students on study programmes who are ready can participate
- they continue to improve the proportion of students of all ages who achieve high

grades in English and mathematics GCSE qualifications

- they improve the collection and analysis of students' destinations in order to confirm the effectiveness of programmes and the impact of careers advice.

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

Yours sincerely

Malcolm Fraser  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three Ofsted Inspectors were assisted by the vice-principal for curriculum, performance and innovation. We met with leaders and governors of the college. We observed lessons and assessments taking place. We held meetings with, or spoke to, managers, teachers, students and apprentices. We scrutinised students' and apprentices' work and assessment records. We reviewed key documents relating to the provider's strategy and implementation plans, self-assessment and improvement planning, and safeguarding. We considered the views of students, apprentices, employers, and parents and carers through discussions and from the responses received through Ofsted's online questionnaires.