

Reaseheath College

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

Unique reference number:	130623
Name of lead inspector:	Zoe Ibbotson, His Majesty's Inspector
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Type of provider:	Specialist further education college
Address:	Reaseheath Nantwich Cheshire CW5 6DF

Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

Reaseheath College was inspected in October 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.

Reaseheath College is a specialist land-based college located in Nantwich, Cheshire. It provides courses from entry to degree level. Around 1,000 students are residential at the college. Most students study courses in agriculture, horticulture and animal care with other significant provision in construction, sport, public services, and food.

At the time of the monitoring visit, there were 2,037 students on education programmes for young people. Most students study at level 3, including 682 students studying T levels. Adult learning is a much smaller part of the college's provision. There were 125 adult students in learning. Most adults study functional skills in English and/or mathematics and access to higher education courses. There were 818 apprentices studying apprenticeships predominantly in land-based serviced engineering, construction plant, bus and coach engineering and rail. The college receives high needs funding for 322 students. Students with high needs study on a wide range of courses throughout the college.

Themes

How much progress have leaders made to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, particularly in theory lessons, to ensure that students benefit from suitably ambitious curriculums, remain on their courses and achieve their qualifications?

Reasonable progress

Teachers mostly use a range of teaching strategies purposefully in theory lessons. They chunk activities so that students have clear steps to practise and consolidate new knowledge and skills. In T-level design, surveying and planning lessons, students design floor plans for domestic dwellings. They then use computer-aided design software to draft elevation plans to extend their knowledge and skills. Teachers share architectural plans from their work in related industries. Students use these examples to depict wall thickness accurately when producing technical drawings. However, in a very few instances, students complete tasks and do not

know what to move on to. In these instances, students disengage as they await the next activity.

Teachers mostly provide students with useful feedback that helps them to improve. Adults studying access to higher education courses act on feedback to extend their use of academic literature to include peer-reviewed source material. However, in GCSE English, the feedback that students receive on their written work is not sufficiently specific. Students are not clear on what they need to do next to gain higher grades.

Teachers' marking for errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar is inconsistent. While teachers mostly correct inaccuracies in students' work, they do not ensure that students revisit and correct errors. This means that students do not make improvements in their spelling, punctuation and grammar. In a very few instances, teacher feedback includes spelling errors.

More students now remain on their courses and achieve their qualifications. Leaders have put steps in place designed to improve the number of students who pass their functional skills examinations on their first attempt. They have introduced more teaching sessions on topics that students found to be the most challenging, such as scale drawings and elevation. However, it is too soon to see the impact of these actions.

How much progress have leaders made to improve the quality and consistency of learning support for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and high needs?

Reasonable progress

Leaders have taken steps to provide additional resources to improve the quality and consistency of learning support for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and high needs. They ensure that staff, including those who are new to teaching, are trained in inclusive practices. Staff appreciate the training that they have received to support teachers and inclusive learning practitioners (ILPs) to work together successfully. Teachers share information about lesson content, activities and the support that students need with ILPs before sessions. ILPs are well prepared and informed to support students with SEND and students with education, health and care (EHC) plans.

Leaders have reintroduced group profiles that document the support strategies for individual students, including students with EHC plans. This means that teachers and ILPs have access to the information that they need to support students effectively.

Leaders ensure that staff have access to the resources that they need to support students with SEND or high needs. They have recruited a specialist learning advisor for SEND and additional ILPs to support students in lessons. Leaders plan for

advanced inclusive learning practitioners to provide weekly one-to-one sessions for students with SEND or high needs later in the autumn term. However, it is too soon to see the impact of this.

Since the previous inspection, leaders have revised the courses offered at foundation level to ensure that the curriculum is ambitious. They have introduced a 'pathway to work' course to provide a route for students to progress on to a supported internship. In addition, leaders have introduced a course that is designed to support students at risk of leaving their courses early to remain in learning. Students have very recently commenced this new 'future tracks' programme. However, it is too early to see the impact of these actions.

How much progress have leaders made in ensuring that students adhere to the college policies and procedures, including health and safety, and the expectations around their conduct in lessons?

Reasonable progress

Leaders and governors have revised their health and safety policies. They have shared these with staff and students so that all are informed about how to be safe. Leaders ensure that safe operating practices and risk assessments are reviewed prior to practical activities.

Most students study a module on health and safety as part of their course. Students are now involved in completing risk assessments before starting practical learning activities. They talk confidently about the importance of health and safety. Students studying equine wear the correct personal protective equipment, when working in practical environments. Teachers teach T-level engineering students safe working practices, when using abrasive wheels.

Since the previous inspection, leaders have introduced the 'Reaseheath Way' expectations for learning and behaviour in lessons. Staff are trained in how to manage behaviour. Teachers of T-level agriculture ensure that students take appropriate notes in lessons to support their revision of key topics. Students studying public services wear their uniforms proudly. Leaders report that students mostly have high attendance. However, the attendance of learners in the lessons visited fell below leaders' expectations.

Leaders have not yet finalised a new student conduct policy. They plan to launch this imminently.

How much progress have leaders made in improving quality assurance processes so that they are able to accurately evaluate the quality of education and intervene swiftly to bring about improvements?

Reasonable progress

Since the previous inspection, leaders have introduced quality processes designed to provide a more accurate assessment of the quality of provision. In the previous academic year, only staff identified as requiring support had their teaching lessons observed. Leaders have reintroduced lesson visits for all teaching staff. They hold professional discussions following lesson visits to agree development plans with teachers.

Leaders provide teachers with access to meaningful staff training designed to improve the quality of teaching and learning. In construction, staff receive bespoke training in setting high expectations for student behaviour and establishing routines in classroom-based lessons. Leaders then use visits to lessons with curriculum area managers to confirm the impact of staff training sessions.

Leaders rightly recognise there is a variable quality of education in a few curriculum areas. They hold monthly meetings to review curriculum areas that do not meet leaders' expectations. Leaders have invested in additional resources to ensure that in these instances, staff are supported to improve. Staff work with teaching and learning coaches and have access to an online training portal. Teachers feel these measures contribute positively to improve their teaching practice.

Leaders and governors identify accurately the strengths and areas for improvement in their provision. Governors undertake activities including visits to lessons and discussions with students and staff. They use these activities to help confirm where leaders' actions have measurable impact. In addition, governors use meetings to review key indicators, including attendance, retention, pass rates and high grades. Governors are now more able to challenge leaders, where evidence suggests areas for improvement remain.

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