

6 August 2024

Derek Smeall
Principal and Chief Executive Officer
Glasgow Kelvin College

Dear Derek,

A team of HM Inspectors from Education Scotland visited Glasgow Kelvin College in May 2024 to undertake an annual engagement visit. During our visit, we talked to learners, staff and stakeholders, and worked closely with the senior managers.

The team found the following major strengths in the college's work:

Learner progress and outcomes

Overall learner success rates for most modes of attendance were below national sector performance. Learner success rates for full-time and part-time further education (FE) programmes have increased. Learner withdrawal rates for full-time and part-time higher education (HE) programmes decreased. Overall success rates for some key groups of learners (learners who are care-experienced, identify as male, identify as female, are from an ethnic minority background or have declared a disability) have improved. All learners are encouraged to identify any additional needs on application to enable a support plan to be agreed before they begin their studies. Support services staff have improved support arrangements for learners to help ensure equity of success. The Students' Association (SA) organise a range of events in partnership with the college which help to promote diversity. The active campus coordinator is helping to improve the college environment and creating opportunities that support the physical and mental wellbeing of learners.

Approaches to assuring and enhancing the quality of learning and teaching including professional updating

Senior Teaching staff access support for learning and teaching through the professional development forum and teaching development leads. Senior managers have introduced new quality enhancement arrangements and communicated these effectively to staff. All teaching staff engage well in the annual professional development review process and professional learning activities during quality weeks. Curriculum managers use a good range of strategies to monitor and improve the quality of learning and teaching. College managers have introduced performance monitoring technology to provide staff with live feedback from learners. Staff use this feedback effectively to monitor learners' experience and plan improvements. Curriculum teams engage well with stakeholders and employers to provide teaching staff with updates to their professional knowledge and skills in line with new technologies and industry needs. Most curriculum teams have increased class representative participation at team meetings. In a few subject areas, skills are tracked, and evidence of their development is recorded.

Learner Engagement

Managers operate effective risk-based approaches to identify and improve programme performance. Most learners can identify clear opportunities to influence improvements to learning and teaching. The student executive committee support the Students' Association (SA) effectively to conduct its activities. College staff work collaboratively with employers and external stakeholders to develop Modern Apprenticeship (MA) provision and bespoke programmes that meet the needs of business and industry. Curriculum team staff report they now have more ownership of their programmes and are more involved in the evaluation process. Almost all teaching staff have a good understanding of the strategies in this plan to improve the quality of learning and teaching. Almost all teaching staff have a good understanding of performance indicators and use them effectively to inform improvements. The college student satisfaction survey participation rate increased this year to 45% of full-time learners from 29% the previous year. The survey indicates an overall learner satisfaction rating of 95%. Managers use a good range of approaches to gather the views of learners. Almost all learners have positive relationships with staff and feel able to share feedback directly with staff about their learning experience.

The following areas for improvement were identified and discussed with the senior managers:

- There is scope to improve learner representation on Modern Apprenticeship (MA) and employer led programmes.
- Learners are not sufficiently aware of their development of essential skills or meta skills.
- There is no college-wide approach to the recording of learners' wider skills, including meta skills.
- Less than half of learners are aware that the SA is a feedback route to improve the learner experience.
- Less than half of class representatives have undergone training and many class representatives are not clear about their role.

Main points for action

There are no main points for action.

What happens next?

We are confident that the college has made satisfactory progress and has the capacity to continue to improve. We will continue to monitor progress with regular contact through the link HM Inspector.

Ian Beach
HM Inspector