



Priory Integrated College

Connecting pastoral support, digital learning and academic progress

Priory Integrated College is a co-educational College for over 600 pupils aged 11-18. This case study focuses on the school's efforts to broaden the curriculum offer for all pupils and to address the connection between pastoral support, digital learning and academic progress through effective monitoring and evaluation.

The most recent inspection conducted by ETI in 2017 reported that leadership and management of the College was good. The college's development planning was very effective with efficient use being made of data to track student progress leading to notable improvements in external examination performance.

College staff have worked diligently to address the issues identified by the inspectorate in earlier inspections. The leadership team has been expanded and the development of leadership at all levels remains a priority.

School Development Plan

The College's school development plan (SDP) reflects more closely the needs of the school with specific areas for improvement led by senior staff. It is a practical, working document focused on developing further the College's learning and teaching, achievements and outcomes, pastoral care and leadership and management.

A significant feature of the plan is for Priory to work towards becoming a UNICEF's Rights Respecting School which is very much in keeping with the college's focus on strengthening its integrated ethos.

Raising expectations and performance

The issues identified in previous inspection reports became the main priorities for development and actions were taken by the leadership team and staff to raise the expectations of all staff and the performance of all students.

The sharing of assessment data with teaching staff, support staff, parents/carers and pupils was viewed as a priority, resulting in greater transparency, accountability, improved target setting

and tracking of individual pupil progress.

Senior staff support Heads of Department in ensuring that academic under-performance is identified quickly and effective interventions applied. A stronger link between the pastoral dimension and academic progress is a key element to improving performance and in achieving success in external examinations.

Data is used to identify pastoral and attitudinal barriers to learning, which are addressed by pastoral staff at the college in partnership with external support services including the Education Authority's Youth Service and Extern.

In keeping the momentum positive and sustainable, Priory Integrated College leaders are conscious that staff and students need also to celebrate their achievements and to take pride in them.

Raising expectations and students' self-regard as learners therefore remains an ongoing priority.

Successful collaboration

The college has worked to ensure that learning experiences meet the wide range of student needs. Consensus has been achieved amongst teaching staff, in consultation with students, on what constitutes effective differentiated teaching within the classroom setting.

The sharing of classroom practice, learning audits, classroom observation and the collation and analysis of staff and students' views on the quality of learning and teaching have contributed to greater consistency in teaching approaches across the college.

There is a focus on a shared language for improvement and the development of a culture of greater openness and a willingness to embrace change. The college continues to focus on developing the skills of middle leaders to enhance their capacity to bring about improvement in the interests of all students.

Curriculum review

A curriculum review has been completed by the college in order to ensure that the curriculum offer meets the ever widening range of pupil needs and aspirations.

The college subsequently developed a 'Pathways curriculum' at key stages three and four, and a five year approach to developing the skills for success at the end of KS4 for all pupils.

The Pathways curriculum provides stretch and challenge for the more academically confident students, and also learning support with a wide range of vocational and foundation level options for students who have additional learning needs.

Conversations between home and college begin in year eight to ensure that every student embarks on an appropriate pathway at the key stage transition points at the end of years 10 and 12. Learning guidance days provide parents and pupils the opportunity for discussion with pastoral, academic and careers staff.

Digital Learning Initiative

Since 2013, the Board of Governors and senior management have invested greatly in a long-term commitment to the use of iPads to enrich learning and teaching. The college's Digital Learning Initiative has been supported by strong visionary leadership and drive.

The use of iPad technology permeates many aspects of college life and its introduction has been effectively led and developed. The training of key staff and the careful piloting of the technology has led to the successful deployment of iPads to all students and staff.

A key focus of the initiative is to develop greater creativity and imagination in the work of both staff and students. The use of this technology has enabled teaching staff to develop personalised learning environments for students in the classroom and has also extended learning opportunities beyond the school day.

Pupils are better able to manage homework and coursework tasks and there is increased input from parents and carers.

The senior leadership of the college believes that the constructive use of this IT has contributed to increased levels of pupil engagement, leading to raised standards and improved student outcomes.

During the last few years, there has been a notable improvement in the attainment of Priory's students in public examinations. The College is working diligently to consolidate these improvements in the interests of all students and staff.

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