

Beaumont College

Focused monitoring visit report

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Focused Monitoring Visit: Main Findings

Context and focus of visit

Beaumont College is run by Scope, a national registered charity. It offers residential and non-residential programmes for young people with cerebral palsy and associated disabilities. In recent years, the college has attracted an increasing number of learners with complex needs. The college has 96 learners, all aged 19 or over, with an almost equal number of male and female students. Nearly two-thirds of the learners are residential, recruited mainly from the northern and midlands regions of England. The main teaching and residential accommodation is located on one site. Learning is also delivered in the community and a range of courses provided at partner colleges is also available. Programmes are based around each learner's individual needs. The curriculum incorporates the entire learner experience, including any therapeutic input. The college offers a range of external awards, where appropriate. The college aims to give students confidence in living as independent young adults and it provides meaningful preparation for the next stage of their lives.

The college was inspected in 2009 and judged to be outstanding. This report focuses on the themes explored during the monitoring visit.

Themes

Self-assessment and improvement planning

What progress has the college made in maintaining a rigorous self-assessment process?

Significant progress

The college continues to demonstrate a rigorous and fully inclusive approach to self-assessment, with clear and accurate identification of strengths and areas for further improvement. The college carries out extensive training for managers at all levels of the organisation to ensure the progress of learners is at the heart of the quality-improvement systems. As a result a culture of accountability and responsibility is fully developed, with a direct link from each team to the principal. Quality-improvement plans are monitored thoroughly. The college continues to be very effective at evaluating the quality of its teaching and learning. In 2010/11 it identified that, in a few cases, support workers needed to improve aspects of their practice in the classroom. This led to refresher training, the impact of which is being carefully monitored. In lessons observed during the visit, students were benefiting from high-quality support that enabled them to access learning effectively. College records show that over two thirds of lessons are judged to be good or better. In joint lesson observations during the visit, there was a high level of similarity between the findings of the college manager and the inspector.

Outcomes for learners

To what extent is the college maintaining the strengths in outcomes for learners noted at the last inspection?

Significant progress

Learners continue to significantly develop their confidence and independence. They develop their levels of concentration, their ability to interact with others, and their ability to make their views known. Learners raise awareness of disability issues in the wider community through performing arts work in theatres, galleries and other public venues. A high proportion of learners who left the college last year achieved their long-term goals. For those wishing to move into supported living or residential placements, 80% achieved this aim. The majority of learners aiming to attend further education or work-related activities were successful in gaining places. For a few learners, their preferred option was not available at the time they left college. To enhance further the destination opportunities for learners, the college has created an additional post to work alongside families and professional workers in their home areas. A large majority of students taking accreditation in 2010/11 gained awards in a range of subjects, including functional English and mathematics, information and communication technology, and arts. E-portfolios are used very effectively to record learners' achievements and ensure they are fully involved in this process.

Quality of provision

To what extent does the college continue to meet learners' needs, especially through partnership working?

Significant progress

The college is highly successful in continuing to meet learners' needs. It works very effectively with schools, community groups, arts organisations, social services and other partners to extend opportunities for its learners. The theatre and dance company set up by the college in 2009 has been successfully extended to music and film. Access to new courses in enterprise, and engaging in community-based projects, enables learners to showcase their work locally and nationally. Learners benefit from a good range of work placements. Since the inspection, the college has improved further its arrangements for work placements. It has introduced greater flexibility in terms of attendance at placements, and the extent to which learners can travel and work independently where appropriate. The three programme levels introduced by the college in recent years are successfully meeting learners' needs by providing challenge for the most able and stimulating courses for those with complex needs. The college works very well with national organisations in the development of communication aids to meet the needs of learners with complex disabilities. Since the inspection, the college has increased further the priority it gives to the use of technology to support learning. Technology specialists have an allocated number of learners to work with and they spend more time in the classroom to ensure that maximum benefit is derived from the equipment.

Leadership and management

What progress has the college made to ensure that evaluation of the performance of different groups of learners is reported more fully to governors?

Significant progress

Very successful action has been taken to address this area for improvement, identified at the last inspection. The governing body now receives comprehensive information to enable it to monitor the performance of different groups of learners. Information is updated termly. Evaluation of the data shows there are no significant differences in outcomes for learners in terms of gender or ethnicity. The governing body monitors carefully the progress of individual learners against their long- and short-term goals. Recent reports also enable them to check the attendance of learners at different college sessions. The governing body is fully involved in monitoring destination information on learners leaving the college and very good use is made of this to inform future planning.

What progress has the college made in the implementation of plans for redeveloping the campus?

Reasonable progress

Plans for the complete redevelopment of the campus were not able to proceed as a result of the restrictions introduced on national funding for college capital projects. Since then the parent company has invested in feasibility studies aimed at part new build and part refurbishment of existing accommodation. This is dependent on fund-raising to support the project, as a result of which no specific timeline is in place. Since the inspection, the college has continued to invest in the maintenance of the current buildings and the provision of specialist equipment to support learning. For example, learners are benefiting from improved facilities in music and film-making. The college has been successful in gaining funding from external sources to provide further updates for its computer and assistive technology equipment.

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