

# Lufton College

## Focused monitoring visit report

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**Unique reference number:** 131921

**Name of lead inspector:** Margaret Swift HMI

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**Type of provider:** Independent specialist college

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## **Focused Monitoring Visit: Main Findings**

### **Context and focus of visit**

Lufton College is one of three further education colleges that form the Mencap National College. The college is based on two sites on the rural outskirts of Yeovil. Established in 1969, it offers full-time day and residential education for learners aged 16 to 25 with a range of learning disabilities, from moderate to severe. These include autistic spectrum disorder, challenging behaviour, complex emotional behaviour and complex learning difficulties.

Currently, Lufton College has 105 residential learners and 11 who attend daily. Of all the learners, 68% are from within the South West region, with the remaining learners being referred from Connexions advisers and specialist schools in the South East and South Wales.

Lufton College was last inspected in April 2010 and all aspects were graded satisfactory. This report focuses on the themes explored during the visit.

### **Themes**

#### **Self-assessment and improvement planning**

<b>What progress has the college made in monitoring quality improvement activities and in using data to make improvements?</b>	<b>Reasonable progress</b>
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The last inspection identified that the college needed to adopt a more systematic approach to the monitoring of quality improvement activities, including the use of data to make improvements. Since then, the college has reintroduced the quality assurance group. The group has introduced a quality cycle that covers all activities and identifies the monitoring periods throughout the year. Key staff report on specific activities to the group each month. Staff quality assure activities identified in the quality cycle; for example, the quality improvement process recently focused on individual learning plans for all learners. Staff had to judge the quality of the independent learning plans and how well tutors were using them to inform each learner's programme. The results are entered onto an action plan which is updated and checked every month.

The college is now using data more effectively. Learners at risk of falling behind are now more easily identified and the required support is put in place. The college uses data well to monitor the performance of different groups of learners, such as males and females and those from minority ethnic background, but it does not yet monitor performance across the range of disabilities.

## Outcomes for learners

### **What progress has the college made in improving the achievements of all learners since the last inspection?**

### **Significant progress**

In 2011, 97% of learners gained their primary learning goals. This has increased from 70% in 2009 and 76% in 2010. Achievements of individual qualifications have also improved in 2011, with 100% of learners achieving adult numeracy and 97% achieving adult information technology skills. Achievement of the adult literacy qualification has improved from 39% in 2009 to 65% in 2011. All learners take qualifications in skills for working life and/or personal progress/personal and social development. The achievement rate for these qualifications in 2011 was 86%. Learners also gain a range of other qualifications including the Duke of Edinburgh bronze award, first aid, hospitality and catering, and office skills.

### **What progress has the college made in moving learners on to further education and training and into independent and supported living since the last inspection?**

### **Reasonable progress**

The college has worked hard since the last inspection to ensure that it identifies appropriate destinations for all learners early on in their programmes. Since the last inspection, the college has recruited many more learners with more complex needs and the destination data reflect this. Thirty-six learners left the college in 2011. Twelve learners progressed to further education, which is an increase on previous years. However, the number of learners progressing to employment has dropped each year and in 2011 only eight learners progressed to paid or unpaid employment. The majority of the remaining learners were either engaged in social enterprise activities or active lives packages, which the college deemed appropriate for their needs. However, five learners were not engaged in any employment, training or activity on leaving the college.

Thirty learners have progressed to supported living, five have returned home and one is in a care home, which represents an improvement on previous years.

## Quality of provision

### **What progress has the college made in improving the planning of lessons to ensure the needs of all learners are met and that learners are set challenging targets?**

### **Reasonable progress**

Target setting for learners is much improved. The college now uses all the information it has about each learner to create appropriate and challenging targets. The three pathways to learning programmes, which were new at the time of the last inspection, are now well established and have proved effective in improving communication between staff. Pathway teams meet every Monday morning to discuss all learners, and staff use the information effectively in planning for each individual learner. All staff receive copies of minutes from all three meetings so that everyone knows what has been discussed and agreed for each learner. Staff have

had training in writing targets since the last inspection and most are now competent. However, the college acknowledges that some staff require further training.

Individual learning tutors have been introduced since the last inspection. Their role is to monitor the individual learning plans for each learner to ensure that the learners are achieving their core targets. The focus of the college's lesson observation scheme has also changed and observers now follow individual learners. The observer is able to see the whole learner experience and can evaluate how well the core targets are being met.

## **Leadership and management**

**What progress has the college made in improving the monitoring arrangements of health and safety practices within the classroom to ensure staff and learners adhere strictly to college guidelines?**

**Insufficient progress**

The last inspection identified that health and safety practices were not always adhered to within the classroom. Health and safety are an agenda item at pathway meetings and the notes from meetings show that although staff raise a wide range of health and safety issues, most of these relate to issues and resources in the residential accommodation and not to practices in the classroom. Since the last inspection, some staff have received risk assessment training but health and safety training for managers was still to be arranged. In December 2011, the minutes of the quality assurance group meeting stated that pathway teams still had to nominate a member from each of their teams to be the health and safety representative.

Health and safety spot checks take place but the college could make better and more frequent use of these. The college monitors health and safety in the classroom through the lesson observation scheme. It is the responsibility of curriculum leaders to raise health and safety concerns and ensure that they are dealt with, but there is no coherent overview of all the health and safety issues raised and how they are dealt with to ensure good practice.

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