

Fortune Centre of Riding Therapy

Focused monitoring visit report

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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

The Fortune Centre of Riding Therapy (FCRT) was founded in 1976. It is an independent specialist college (ISC) of further education (FE) for young people between the ages of 16 and 25 years old. It is based in the south of England in the New Forest. Students learn through their involvement with horses. They follow the three-year residential Further Education through Horsemastership (FETH) course which is internally accredited. Students are taught life and social skills and equine skills. Students are able to take external qualifications in functional skills and horse care up to National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) level 2. The FCRT's mission is to enable horse-motivated people with special needs to relate more successfully to others and to develop greater independence and skills and have more control over their own lives.

The last full inspection took place in January 2008. All areas were judged to be satisfactory except quality of provision, which was judged to be good. This report focuses on the themes explored during the visit.

Themes

Self-assessment and improvement planning

What progress has the college made in using its management information systems to provide sufficient evidence and data to support the college's analysis of how well it is raising standards?

Reasonable progress

Although the new management information system is not fully operational, it is partly in use and is producing useful reports. Since the last inspection, FRCT has put in place tighter controls for monitoring the progress of their students. For example, all targets set for students are on a shared drive and networked to all locations and an appropriate range of electronic and paper sources is used to ensure all staff are kept fully informed of the progress of all students. FRCT is making better use of its data to help drive improvements. Staff can now quickly identify when a student is below target and put in place measures to ensure they catch up. Staff are routinely analysing data and reporting on trends in success rates and achievements of different groups.

Outcomes for learners

What progress has the college made in improving students' achievements since the last inspection and in ensuring that

Significant progress

students make sufficient progress in moving on?

Outcomes for 2009/2010 are good. In July 2010, 13 students left FRCT; 12 are in further training or paid or voluntary employment, which is an improvement on the previous year. Nine students are in independent or supported living. Four students returned home, of whom three are in further training or employment. One of the students returned home due to lack of funding from social services and two are awaiting placements. Success rates for National Open College Network (NOCN) functional skills are very high. The pass rate was 100% in mathematics and 80% in both information and communication technology (ICT) and in English. All leavers passed the British Horse Society (BHS) progressive riding test 1 and a basic food hygiene certificate. Four students achieved a full NVQ level 1 in horse care and four others achieved a part award NVQ level 1 in horse care.

Quality of provision

What progress has the college made since the last inspection and monitoring visit in setting sufficiently precise targets to enable them to monitor students' progress effectively? **Reasonable progress**

Reasonable progress has been made in setting more precise targets for students. Particular attention has been paid to the setting of long- and medium-term targets and many of these are now clear and specific. However, some individual learning plans do not identify a long-term target. There is a strong focus on the daily living aspects and good links between the curriculum and daily living tasks. FRCT has done much work in helping group leaders to become skilled at setting precise targets but this work now needs to continue with all other staff. Short-term targets set for students still vary, some are very precise but others are still too broad and vague. A minority of targets are written in language lifted directly from awarding bodies' documents and need to be re-written in language students will understand.

Leadership and management

What progress has the college made in developing mechanisms to validate fairness and reliability of assessment judgements for its internally accredited course? **Significant progress**

FRCT's own internally accredited course is fully mapped to the externally accredited qualification and the same rigorous internal verification processes are applied to both courses. A thorough internal verification system is in place. The internal verifier samples work across all assessors. The assessors are observed annually and they have to complete an approved updating event each year. Assessors meet regularly to discuss issues and moderate work. The internal course is also quality assured through the college's observation of teaching and learning scheme and through monitoring observations, which focus purely on standards and which are carried out weekly across all groups and locations.

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