

# David Lewis College

## Focused monitoring visit report

---

**Unique reference number:** 131860

**Name of lead inspector:** Susan Preece HMI

**Last day of inspection:** 4 October 2010

**Type of provider:** Independent specialist college

**Address:** Mill Lane  
Warford  
Alderley Edge  
Cheshire  
SK9 7UD

**Telephone number:** 01565 640160

## FOCUSED MONITORING VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

### Context and focus of visit

David Lewis College is an independent specialist residential and day further education college for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Many also have neurological disorders such as epilepsy and autism with associated behaviours. The college is situated in the village of Warford, two miles from Alderley Edge and within reach of Manchester. The college forms part of the David Lewis Centre and is set on a 40 acre site in rural Cheshire. The centre provides a range of multi-disciplinary support services. There are 84 learners enrolled at the college and 21 of these attend on a daily basis. Approximately 5% of learners are from a minority ethnic background. Seven learners are funded through the Welsh Assembly Government. The most recent inspection report was published in May 2007 and overall effectiveness was judged to be good. The last monitoring visit took place in June 2009 and of the five areas explored two were judged to have made insufficient progress. These were the promotion of equality and diversity and the response to guidelines relating to safer recruitment practices. The college is also inspected regularly by Care Quality Commission and the outcome of its previous inspection was good. This report focuses on the themes explored during the last monitoring visit.

### Themes

#### Self-assessment and improvement planning

**What progress has been made in using quality improvement arrangements more effectively so that managers can identify weaknesses at an early stage and take swift action to tackle them?**

**Significant progress**

The process of self-assessment is comprehensive and rigorous, and it regularly secures improvements. The report is detailed and includes a range of data to support judgments. Areas for improvement, identified at the last monitoring visit and previous inspection, have been effectively addressed. There is a strong and well-established culture of continuous improvement. The comprehensive quality cycle, including curriculum reviews and a robust teaching and learning observation programme, promotes improvement at each stage of planning. The effective streamlining of the observation team and the use of peer referencing to moderate the process has ensured realistic action planning and improved coherence and consistency. Performance is well monitored and plans are at an advanced stage to introduce a more effective electronic management information system which will help to judge successful outcomes against key performance indicators. The

development of half-termly curriculum and residential self-assessment reports facilitates the analysis of data to ensure that all learners are achieving well. The quality improvement plan includes smart targets, expected outcomes and realistic timescales. It identifies who is responsible for implementing actions so that ownership and accountability for quality improvement are clear throughout the college.

## Outcomes for learners

### **What progress has been made in improving learners' outcomes since the last inspection?**

### **Significant progress**

Success rates have risen significantly over the past year. Amendments to the curriculum, the implementation of foundation learning programmes, improved individual learning plans (ILPs), the continued emphasis and development on the recognition and recording of progress and achievement (RARPA) and increased access to a range of external awards have all resulted in improvements in learners' attainment. For example, 93% of learners achieved, or partially achieved, targets as specified on their ILP. There has also been a significant increase in the numbers of learners entered for external awards. Accredited achievement has risen exponentially from an average success rate of 53% in 2008/09 to 81% in 2009/10. The further development of the curriculum into four strands of learning has provided a more diverse choice of subject areas and clearer progression routes. The college successfully continues to develop partnerships and links with workplaces and a range of external providers. Analysis of achievement data has identified that learners with autism are slightly less likely to achieve as well as those without autistic traits, so additional focused training in autism has been delivered to teaching and support staff. While it is too early to evaluate the impact of this training, its effectiveness is being carefully monitored.

## Quality of provision

### **What progress has been made in the promotion of equality and diversity throughout all aspects of the curriculum?**

### **Reasonable progress**

The college has made reasonable progress with regard to improvements in the promotion of equality and diversity throughout the curriculum. All staff and governors have received training in this area. Learners' achievements are effectively monitored according to gender, disability and ethnicity and appropriate action is taken as required. Equality impact assessments, together with associated action plans, are being implemented and managed effectively. A comprehensive guide to planning for equality and diversity has been disseminated to staff teams and is being used widely to inform practice. An equality and diversity working group has been established and includes representation from the student council. This is

beginning to have a positive impact on the college by raising the profile of the promotion of equality and diversity within the curriculum. For example, personal and racial differences have been successfully celebrated during activities such as the recent fashion show held at a large public venue and cross-centre events such as the celebration of the Chinese New Year. Learners' views are collected using a range of media and the outcomes are used well to evaluate the provision and bring about improvements. Staff work effectively with providers of work experience to ensure that they have a good understanding of how to work positively with learners.

## **Leadership and management**

**How well has the college responded to guidelines relating to safer recruitment practices and safeguarding the needs of vulnerable learners?**

**Significant progress**

Self-assessment accurately identifies that the college has made significant progress with regard to improvements in safer recruitment practices and safeguarding the needs of vulnerable learners. The single central record of vetting and recruitment checks is now comprehensive and it is checked regularly by the Chair of Governors and the Director of Education and Life Skills. There are extensive systems to ensure that learners are able to communicate their feelings relating to personal safety. This is done through a variety of means such as learner surveys, use of advocates, house meetings, tutorials and meetings with key workers. A multi-disciplinary team closely monitors behaviour and attendance to identify issues and respond accordingly. Effective tutorial systems and the integration of rights and responsibilities into the curriculum have resulted in helping learners to know how to recognise unfair, unsafe or abusive treatment by others and what action to take to protect themselves. Embedded and prioritised within the curriculum is the safe use of information and communication technology. Partnership working with the local police has been very successful in heightening awareness of e-safety among staff, learners and parents/carers. The promotion of health and safety measures and the management of risk remain high priority.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this report in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

Royal Exchange Buildings  
St Ann's Square  
Manchester, M2 7LA

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2010