

Orchard Hill College

Focused monitoring visit report

Unique reference number: 131948

Name of lead inspector: Diane Stacey HMI

Last day of inspection: 14 March 2011

Type of provider: Independent specialist college

Address: Old Town Hall
Woodcote Road
Wallington
Surrey
SM6 0NB

Telephone number: 020 8254 7820

FOCUSED MONITORING VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Context and focus of visit

Orchard Hill College is a non-residential national specialist college that provides education for young people and adults with severe/profound and complex learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The college's main site is in Wallington Surrey, with additional centres at Vauxhall, Clapham Junction, Hackbridge and Carshalton.

At the last inspection in July 2008, overall effectiveness, achievements and standards, quality of provision and leadership and management were good. Arrangements for equality and diversity were outstanding.

Themes

Self-assessment and improvement planning

What progress has been made in seeking and including the views of learners within the college's self-assessment process?	Significant Progress
---	-----------------------------

The college has made significant progress in seeking the views of learners as part of the overall feedback used to inform managers of the strengths and areas for improvement. Since the last inspection, the half-term tutorials formally seek out and record learners' views. The weekly tutorial notes include informal views of learners expressed during the week. The college ensures that learners have access to an adapted and accessible version of the learner surveys which are conducted each term. All learners are now automatically part of the learner council. Separate councils exist for each of the five centres. Learners have direct electronic access to communicate with the college principal. Learners have been involved in the national campaign 'Giving a Voice' and are now part of staff interview panels. Governors have sought the views of learners about college policies, for example the health and safety and anti-bullying policies and how they might be adapted to be more accessible for learners. Although learners are not on the governing body, learner representatives are included in part of the governor meetings. The college has taken many actions as a result of feedback from learners. For example, at one centre, the teaching rooms have been renamed using underground station names. This was supported by Transport for London who provided the signs for them. Links with a local charitable organisation provide weekend activities as a result of learners' request.

Outcomes for learners

Have learners continued to make good progress in achieving their learning objectives?	Significant Progress
--	-----------------------------

The college continues to have good levels of achievements of learners' objectives. Of the learners who left last year, 2009/10, 83% achieved their targets compared to the previous two years of 74% and 78%. Achievement of external qualifications is

particularly high. The college is currently in the process of planning and producing a wide range of externally-verified courses to better suit the needs of their learner cohort. The college has introduced a 'learners at risk and raising achievement' strategy to alert staff of any poor attendance, sickness and non-achievements of objectives. The college collates, analyses and acts on a good range of information relating to the achievement and progress made by different groups of learners in relation to gender, types of disabilities and ethnicity.

What progress has been made in the development of appropriate destinations for learners when they leave?

Reasonable Progress

The majority of learners access part-time further education with Orchard Hill College when they leave their full-time programmes. Additionally, the learners build on their skills and interests from their time at the college and continue with activities within their local community. The college has developed very effective links with external agencies for each individual learner to plan their future and ensure that a secure support network is in place for when they leave. Few learners who progress into local further education colleges or into employment of some type. However, links with local further education colleges have developed and one learner is now on a full-time programme at a local college. The college plans this year to introduce more learners this year to the idea of considering this as a next step. Last year, one learner gained part-time paid employment and one is working in a volunteering capacity. Local employers offer a wide range of work-experience placements including farm work, catering, office, retail and pet grooming. One learner currently on a work placement has successfully secured employment with the employer when he leaves the college this year.

Quality of provision

What progress has been made to improve the setting of specific objectives for learners?

Significant Progress

The college has introduced new procedures since the last inspection to monitor and support the setting of specific and relevant objectives for learners. Initial assessment to gather a range of pre-entry information about learners remains very thorough. The therapy and curriculum teams now work more closely together to set and monitor specific targets for learners. Visits are made to see learners in their home environments where possible prior to enrolment to help identify specific and realistic targets. The monitoring of progress against targets has improved significantly using an 'at risk' alert system. Any issues are thoroughly investigated where learners are not progressing appropriately, and objectives are reviewed and re-set where necessary. Staff have received training and support to improve and make targets more specific, which generally they are. However, the wording used is sometimes overly complicated and not sufficiently aimed at ensuring learners' understanding.

Leadership and management

What progress has been made to improve the process of observing the quality of teaching and learning?

Reasonable Progress

Observations of teaching and learning are carried out regularly and the recording of judgements made during observations has been revised to ensure that learning is a key component. For the past two years, the majority of lessons have been graded good or better. A range of activities supports teachers who are judged satisfactory or below standard through their step-up programme. Managers negotiate with teachers on specific development areas and support is appropriately arranged from managers and peers to help teachers to improve. An ungraded observation of a teaching session follows the formal development plan. However, the recording of judgements made during observations needs further refinement. Of the small number of records seen during the visit, there was too much description of classroom activities and insufficient judgements recorded.

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 assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231 or email 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.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

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

T: 0300 123 1231

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2011