

# Dorton College of Further Education

## Reinspection monitoring visit report

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**Unique reference number:** 133001

**Name of lead inspector:** Joyce Deere HMI

**Last day of inspection:** 9 June 2011

**Type of provider:** Independent specialist college

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## RE-INSPECTION MONITORING VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

### Context and focus of visit

Dorton College of Further Education is a specialist residential college, which is owned by the Royal London Society for the Blind (RLSB). The college is located on a 47-acre site at Seal, near Sevenoaks, in Kent. It provides further education for students who are blind or partially sighted. Increasingly, the students who attend have multiple additional needs. The Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA) funds 48 students. The college works with three partner colleges, and 18 students follow their main programme in one of these. Thirty students are taught on the Dorton College site.

At the inspection in November 2010 the overall effectiveness of the college was inadequate. Capacity to improve, outcomes for learners, the quality of provision, leadership and management and safeguarding were inadequate. Equality of opportunity was satisfactory. This visit inspected improvements made in three aspects: outcomes for learners; teaching and learning; and, safeguarding. It did not inspect other inadequate aspects of the provision.

### Themes

#### Self-assessment and improvement planning

**What progress has the college made through its self-assessment and improvement planning to improve the quality of teaching and learning?**

**Insufficient progress**

At the last inspection inspectors found that teaching and learning were inadequate. The college recognises in its updated self-assessment report that this area continues to be inadequate. The college is implementing an improvement plan that includes teaching and learning, and has appointed a mentor to work with the teaching staff. The mentor has carried out unannounced and announced observations of teaching and learning, and worked with teachers to develop an individual action plan, which they are implementing. Although teachers have started to improve the standard of teaching, they have made insufficient progress in ensuring that students develop their skills and understanding. Students continue to work in ability-based tutor groups for much of the week, and teachers have not developed individualised programmes. Teachers require more training to ensure that activities are appropriate for students who are blind or partially sighted, that the tasks set are meaningful, and, that all students have sufficient opportunity to contribute meaningfully to discussions. Students need sufficient time to explore the tasks set fully in order to learn. The ratios of support staff to students in lessons are very high; usually one to one, but teachers do not involve the support staff sufficiently in the planning and implementation of sessions. All of the teaching staff have, or are working towards, a teaching qualification, but only one, who teaches GCSE science, has a qualification in teaching students with a visual impairment. No staff member has a qualification in the teaching of literacy or numeracy at the required level, and none is on an appropriate training course.

## **Outcomes for learners**

### **What progress has been made in improving outcomes for learners?**

**Reasonable progress**

Outcomes for students were inadequate at the last inspection. Since then the outcomes for the 16 students at the main partner college have improved. Local end-of-year data indicate that 85% of these students will have met their predicted learning aims and 10% will have exceeded them. This is a significant improvement, compared with the declining success rates in 2009/10. The thirty students on the main Dorton site now have revised individual learning plans using five generic domains against which progress is monitored. Teachers work with students in setting their individual goals, which are more specific than previously, and key members of staff now have responsibility for monitoring these. To date, around 85% of these goals have been achieved. The staff acknowledge the need to ensure greater consistency in the setting of goals. Staff from across the college carry out monthly assessments to identify, and take action about, any issues relating to care, therapies and education. In order to be able to collate and analyse destinations, a transitions team has just started at the college which will maintain contact with leavers. The college is about to introduce a new baseline assessment, using the five identified domains that have been piloted this term.

## **Safeguarding**

### **What progress has been made in improving safeguarding?**

**Significant progress**

At the last inspection the college was not adequately ensuring the safeguarding of students. It has made significant progress since then. Senior managers have appointed an experienced manager for safeguarding. They have ensured that systems are now in place to rectify all of the areas for improvement, and these are making students safer. The college is starting to include aspects of safeguarding in all of its policies. The central register is up to date, and the college has improved the processes for its recruitment of agency staff, ensuring that they have had adequate safeguarding training, as well as Criminal Records Bureau checks. Managers now record, follow up and analyse safeguarding incidents and accidents more rigorously. The monitoring procedures make it possible for staff to identify patterns and frequency of incidents. Students are now asked to comment on the outcomes of investigations of incidents. Managers have introduced a monthly safeguarding committee, which includes a governor. Governors have had updated training. Staff have rectified the health and safety lapses at the farm, which were identified at the last inspection. Managers have recently agreed new service level agreements with partner colleges, incorporating safeguarding requirements.

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