

# Glasshouse College

## Focused monitoring visit report

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**Name of lead inspector:** Margaret Hobson 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

Glasshouse College is an independent specialist residential college that provides further education for young people with a range of complex needs associated with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The college's guiding principles are formed from the work of Rudolf Steiner, William Morris and John Ruskin and include a holistic approach to all aspects of education. The college provides a wide range of learning opportunities which are primarily based on craft activities. There are currently 75 learners, of which 38 are day learners. It is anticipated that the proportion of day learners will increase in the next academic year.

The current principal has been in post for the last two years. The senior team has been restructured and strengthened by the appointment of a head of learning and quality. The most recent inspection report was published in November 2009. Overall effectiveness was graded good as were all other aspects. Equality and diversity were graded satisfactory. This report focuses on the themes explored during the monitoring visit.

### Themes

#### Self-assessment and improvement planning

<b>What progress has the college made in improving the self-assessment and quality improvement processes?</b>	<b>Reasonable progress</b>
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At the previous inspection, the quality assurance arrangements were judged good. However, the systematic monitoring of impact against actions taken was inconsistent across all areas. The current quality improvement plan is detailed, monitored very effectively and updated weekly. It is promoting a more rigorous and systematic approach to quality improvement across the provision. Many aspects of the quality improvement arrangements have been revised. The self-assessment process was judged effective at the previous inspection but is now developed further. A detailed electronic template is used to gain feedback from staff, learners, parents, employers and other stakeholders to better inform the self-assessment report. At the previous inspection, it was identified that feedback from employers was underdeveloped but the process is now in place.

The process for the observation of teaching and learning has been revised and was implemented six months ago. A rigorous process took place to select and train an increased number of observers. A review of a sample of observation forms indicates the satisfactory identification of key issues for development. The college profile of recent observations indicates a more rigorous process of grading compared with previous years. However, it is too soon to judge the full impact of these changes.

## Outcomes for learners

### What progress has the college made in improving learner outcomes?

### Significant progress

At the previous inspection, the recording of learners' literacy and numeracy skills was underdeveloped. A comprehensive recording and tracking system is now in place. Diagnostic assessment is used effectively to establish each learner's starting point on entry. Individual progress is mapped against the relevant criteria and shown clearly through colour coding. Specific tracking sheets highlighting skills for individual learners are completed by tutors each term. Managers monitor these effectively for the quality of completion as well as learners' progress. A specialist functional skills team now provides very effective support for curriculum tutors to develop opportunities for individual learners in sessions. The specialist team monitors the progress of individual learners closely through weekly meetings. A speech and language therapist now works closely with the team to provide guidance when learners are not making sufficient progress. College value added data indicate that many learners are making good progress in improving their literacy and numeracy levels by at least one or more levels. Achievement of additional qualifications linked to learners' long-term goals is good. For example, one learner in his third year has achieved a wide range of relevant qualifications to support his aspiration to be a security guard.

## Quality of Provision

### What progress has the college made in improving the use of information communication technology (ICT) in teaching and learning?

### Significant progress

The college has significantly changed the culture in its use of ICT in the craft curriculum. This was underdeveloped at the previous inspection. Currently, 25 workshops make good use of computers for research, planning and design. In the jewellery workshop, learners use technology to create mood boards. Clear plans are in place to have computers in all 33 craft workshops in the next year. Learners and staff make good use of tablet computers and handheld devices to track and record individual progress. One learner with complex communication needs uses assistive technology on a tablet computer to communicate very effectively.

The college's ICT resources have been significantly increased through external funding. Three training centres are now in use for learners' and staff skills development. Good use is made of the multimedia suite for learners to produce video evidence for their accreditation. The digital printing facility provides a base for learners to run a social enterprise, providing printing and publishing services for local businesses. The student council ran a very well-planned e-learning safety awareness week. An increasing number of learners are achieving accreditation in a small range of ICT awards. Plans are in place to extend the range of units.

**What progress has the college made in increasing the enrichment and extended curriculum opportunities for day learners?**

**Significant progress**

The previous inspection identified the need to extend enrichment opportunities and community-based activities for day learners. The college has now strengthened the role of the student council in leading on the development of enrichment and community opportunities. Supported by a member of staff, learner involvement is now more structured through the weekly council meetings. A termly student newsletter provides very detailed information on activities and events for all learners, but specifically for day learners and their parents/carers. College data now indicate good involvement of day learners in enrichment and community based activities such as volunteering. For example, day and residential learners worked with a local hospice to make glass pebbles to line a stream in a remembrance garden. Five of the six learners who have been chosen to take part in the guard of honour for the opening of the Olympic Games are day students. The college has adjusted times and venues to increase participation by day learners. For example, the college now runs its own Duke of Edinburgh award group at the end of a college day and provides transport home for day learners. Five of the seven participants are day learners.

**Leadership and management**

**What progress has the college made in improving the promotion of equality and diversity?**

**Reasonable progress**

The previous inspection identified the need for further work to ensure the better promotion of equality and diversity across the curriculum. A college review enhanced the role of the equality and diversity officer. A new officer is recently in post. The annual equality and diversity report is comprehensive and makes effective use of data to monitor and set targets. A detailed action plan is in place. Actions are being implemented to restructure the equality and diversity working group. In November 2011, the observation of teaching and learning form was amended to monitor the promotion of equality and diversity in sessions. The process is developing satisfactorily but it is too soon to judge the impact of this change.

Learners have good involvement in an increased range of equality and diversity awareness raising days and festivals. This has been enhanced by the college's links with a local centre for equality and diversity run by a charity. The college has strengthened its annual 'respecting differences' week through collaboration with the charity. In 2011, the event included a significant increase in the range of planned activities including visits, speakers, learner performances and staff training. The week focused on a good range of diversity strands.

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