

Oakwood Court College

Independent specialist college

Inspection dates		14-16 November 2012
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Good-2
	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory-3
Outcomes for learners		Good-2
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Good-2
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Good-2

Summary of key findings for learners

This provider is good because:

- The majority of learners gain vocational, literacy and numeracy qualifications.
- Learners make significant progress in increasing their self-confidence and their ability to communicate more effectively which they use particularly well in both social and work settings.
- Teaching is well planned to take into account the individual needs of all learners. A good range of activities and resources motivate and challenge learners very well.
- Learners now have significantly more work experience placements as part of the improved transition programme to enable them to practise and reinforce new skills gained through the re-structured curriculum.
- The college is led and managed very well. Senior managers, supported very well by the parent company's board of directors, have made many improvements since the last inspection. Incisive quality monitoring arrangements continue to improve teaching, learning and assessment.

This is not yet an outstanding provider because:

- Lessons do not adequately promote equality and diversity.
- Learners are often late for the start of the college day if travelling from residences off-site and they therefore miss important aspects of tutorials.
- The views of learners and employers do not sufficiently inform managers of the strengths and areas requiring improvement that in their view affect learners' time at college.
- Data are not formally or fully analysed to inform managers about any discrepancies in the performance of different groups of learners.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Improve arrangements for learners who travel from off-site residences to the college to ensure they arrive on time each morning so that they may benefit from morning tutorials.
- Improve the planning, promotion and reinforcement of aspects of equality and diversity during lessons and tutorials in order to develop learners' understanding.
- Implement more formal methods for collating and using feedback from learners and employers to provide managers with more information to feed into the college's self-assessment process.
- Implement more systematic arrangements to analyse the wide range of data that are collated to identify more clearly the actions needed to improve the provision further.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Good
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Learners make good progress in achieving externally-accredited qualifications. Over the past two years learners have enjoyed greater opportunities, through the re-structured curriculum, to study towards vocational qualifications from entry level to foundation level, with a small number of learners now starting to work towards intermediate level qualifications. The majority of learners successfully achieve the qualifications that they work for. Success rates for literacy and numeracy qualifications are high and the majority of learners make good progress in moving to higher level qualifications. ▪ College staff routinely collate data on the performance of all learners. However, staff do not formally analyse data sufficiently, nor do they summarise findings or record actions where there are known differences in the achievement of different groups of learners, for example learners who are more able achieve their main educational goals at a discernibly higher rate than learners with more complex difficulties. Although teachers and managers know this to be the case, the data showing it are not analysed nor are possible reasons or remedies explored. ▪ Learners' self-confidence increases significantly during their time at the college. Learners demonstrate their raised confidence levels through the good standard of their course work, in social interactions with staff and peers, through improved abilities in aspects of independent living and in increased understanding of how to solve problems. ▪ Learners develop very well skills that might enable them to gain employment through the good range of work experience placements with local employers including, where they are able, gaining independent travel skills. Learners are able to apply these improved skills very effectively in social situations and during their work placements. ▪ Learners' progression into supported living, further training or into work of some type is good. An increasing number of learners progress to higher level courses, within vocational and literacy and numeracy programmes, both during their time at the college and when they leave and enter mainstream further education. ▪ Learners enjoy their time at college, and are generally on time for their lessons and for work placements. However, learners who live off campus rely on college transport to travel to and from their residences and are frequently late for morning tutorials. 	
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Teaching, learning and assessment are good and contribute very effectively to the good development of learners' personal and vocational skills and to the high success rates of 	

qualifications gained by learners. The revised curriculum offers learners better opportunities to work towards their goals through more practical activities.

- Teachers use their expertise very effectively through well-planned lessons and a good range of activities and resources to fully engage, motivate and challenge learners, ensuring that each learner's needs are planned and catered for. The college has invested in a good range of information and learning technologies (ILT) which teachers use very effectively in the majority of teaching situations. Learners have good access to computers for self-study in their residences.
- Teachers use highly effective questioning to check learners' understanding, monitor progress, extend learners that are more able and ensure all learners contribute to learning activities. Teachers develop the ability of learners to assess their own strengths and those of their peers, and encourage learners to ask questions when they do not understand.
- Very effective behaviour management strategies enable learners to participate fully in all activities and to develop the skills to manage their own behaviour. This results in reduced support arrangements as learners develop appropriate coping skills.
- Initial, baseline and continuing assessment practices inform the personal support arrangements and curriculum choices for each individual learner very well. Clear and challenging personal core targets are set at the start of learners' programmes, and equally challenging curriculum targets are identified once learners decide on a preferred vocational route. The standard of learners' work is good and detailed feedback from teachers supports improvement, helping learners build on skills gained in a wide range of classroom and workshop settings.
- Information, advice and guidance, and support are good. Transition planning starts at an early stage in learners' programmes and incorporates regular discussions to help learners plan their progress towards their main goals. The improved and expanded work experience placements, with a wide range of local employers, ensure that learners have good opportunities and appropriate support to develop the skills they need for future employment and life.
- Teachers develop learners' English, mathematics and functional skills very well through well-planned integration in all learners' activities. Where it is appropriate, specialist teachers provide stimulating teaching in discrete English and mathematics lessons.
- The promotion of equality and diversity through teaching and learning requires further improvement. Whilst a small minority of lessons demonstrated a few good examples of how to integrate discussions about equality and diversity in lessons, too few lesson plans identify how teachers propose to do this and so equality and diversity rarely become a focus for learning.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders and managers set a clear vision for the college, fully supported by the board of directors of the parent company and shared by all staff. Managers set themselves challenging strategic targets. Plans for expansion and development have been very well considered and offer staff an exciting opportunity for extensive review and revision of the provision: a second campus on the Devon/Cornwall border has recently opened; the main campus is being extended through the acquisition of a large adjacent property. Leaders have re-structured the curriculum offer, making it much more specific to learners' individual needs and aspirations. Assessment procedures now routinely inform learners' targets and relate more clearly to learners' competencies and future goals.
- As part of the changes prompted by the above developments, teaching, learning and assessment practices have been reviewed and improved. All teachers and trainers are appropriately qualified and have a good range of expertise in teaching and supporting learners. Managers provide good support for all staff to gain qualifications that will be of benefit to learners. In addition, the good range of in-house training ensures that staff have the relevant skills and knowledge to support learners. Staff have regular supervisions and annual appraisals.

- Teaching resources are good with effective use made of ILT, such as interactive whiteboards. The physical expansion referred to above is leading directly to further extensions and improvements to both teaching and residential resources.
- Managers have improved how staff teams evaluate their curriculum area, through annual programme reviews, with results informing the college's self-assessment process and subsequent report. However, although plentiful feedback is obtained from both learners and employers during the course of the year, the self-assessment report takes too little account of the evaluative contributions of either group.
- Managers are well informed in most respects about the progress and achievements of learners, and they collect and collate these data thoroughly. However, they do not systematically analyse them in order to gain insight to the variable performance of different groups of learners. As a consequence, managers are not in a position to consider setting specific improvement targets for any particular group who may be performing relatively less well than other learners.
- The structure and impact of the curriculum is regularly and incisively reviewed as part of the self-assessment process. However, the curriculum plan does not always encompass all aspects of learners' activities.
- The teaching and learning observation scheme directly improves teaching and learning. Records of observations do not always identify fully the key actions for teachers to improve, but these are made explicit and communicated clearly to teachers when the observations are moderated.
- The well-managed, restructured curriculum meets the needs of individual learners very well. The new curriculum provides learners with many opportunities to put into practice the skills they learn and acknowledges the acquisition of these skills through the revised external accreditation framework. Links with the local community are strong at both the main site and the newly-opened campus.
- Staff and learners share a mutual respect for each other. Managers successfully promote a culture in which bullying and discrimination are not tolerated, and take decisive, effective action whenever they do occur. Managers are developing a range of initiatives to promote equality and diversity to staff, learners and other interested parties, including a useful newsletter and the development of a well-populated external website. However, despite a few examples of good practice being seen by inspectors, teachers do not adequately plan how they intend to promote equality and diversity within lessons, and consequently lessons rarely touch on these themes.
- The college meets its statutory requirements for safeguarding learners at both campuses. The college promotes the well-being of learners very effectively through individual and activity-based risk assessments and through teachers incorporating safety issues, such as 'stranger danger', within lessons and tutorials. Employers' premises are appropriately checked for standards of health and safety prior to learners commencing work placements.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

Oakwood Court College

Inspection grades are based on a provider's performance: 1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Requires improvement 4: Inadequate	Overall	Foundation Learning
Overall effectiveness	2	2
Outcomes for learners	2	2
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	2	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management	2	2

Provider details

Oakwood Court College	
Type of provider	Independent specialist college
Age range of learners	16+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	Full-time: 39
	Part-time: 0
Principal	Mr Paul Collings
Date of previous inspection	November 2008
Website address	www.oakwoodcourt.ac.uk

Provider information at the time of the inspection								
Main course or learning programme level	Level 1 or below		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4 and above	
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)								
Full-time	11	36	-	-	-	-	-	-
Part-time	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Number of learners aged 14-16	N/A							
Number of community learners	N/A							
Number of employability learners	N/A							
Funding received from	Education Funding Agency (EFA)							
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ N/A 							

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector

Diane Stacey HMI

Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and one additional inspector, assisted by the vice principal as nominee, carried out the inspection with short notice. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors also used data on learners' achievements over the last three years to help them make judgements. Inspectors used group and individual interviews to gather the views of learners and employers; these views are reflected throughout the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all of the provision at the provider. Inspectors looked at the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across all of the provision.

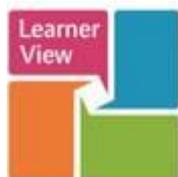
What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Handbook for the inspection of further education and skills 2012*, Part 2:

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/handbook-for-inspection-of-further-education-and-skills-september-2012>

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