

Landmarks College

Independent specialist college

Inspection dates		5–7 February 2013
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Requires improvement-3
	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory-3
Outcomes for learners		Requires improvement-3
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Requires improvement-3
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Requires improvement-3

Summary of key findings for learners

This provider requires improvement because:

- The college does not yet capture learners' progress well enough to show all the skills and knowledge they have made over time. As a result, it is still difficult to judge the overall progress learners make.
- While improved, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not yet consistently good or better.
- Managers and staff now use data more effectively on a day-to day basis but its use by senior leaders and managers to help the college review precisely how well they are doing over time, including how well different groups of learners achieve, is less well established.
- The board of trustees does not review some key aspects of the college's work in enough detail and often this is because managers do not provide them with enough information to enable them to ask probing questions about what is going well and less well.
- While managers have successfully ensured several important areas, such as work experience, have improved notably since the last inspection, a number of other key areas have not yet improved enough.

This provider has the following strengths:

- Most learners who study for accredited qualifications achieve these successfully.
- Staff manage learners with very challenging behaviour well which helps learners to be more independent and behave more appropriately in social and working environments.
- Learners enjoy coming to Landmarks, attend well and learn to respect staff and their peers.
- Staff provide plenty of good support in helping learners improve their communication.
- The college has good links with local schools and employers and this has led to learners having access to a wide range of facilities such as sport and drama. In addition, these links have meant there are now more locations for learners to undertake work experience.
- The principal and senior leaders are passionate about raising aspirations for their learners and this enthusiasm has led to high staff morale and helped to form an ambitious vision for the college.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning so it is consistently good or better and so that all learners make at least good progress. This can be achieved by: ensuring all learning activities and subject targets better match the abilities of individual learners and are appropriately challenging; making sure all staff use questioning better to extend and deepen learners' knowledge and skills; and by checking that learning support staff avoid the temptation to sometimes over-direct learners, so that learners' independence can be enhanced.
- Managers should review further, and where appropriate adapt, how the college uses the open-plan teaching accommodation at the main site, so that noise or limited classroom space does not impede learning in some lessons.
- Strengthen teachers' recording and tracking of learners' overall progress by more sharply identifying learners' long and medium-term goals and reviewing these regularly to ensure they clearly build on the skills and knowledge learners have already gained. In addition, better link learners' achievement of short-term targets to their longer-term goals in order to gain a more holistic picture of their progress.
- Improve the use of data analysis and reporting at senior management level so that leaders and managers can more clearly review trends over time so they can better target and prioritise improvement.
- Ensure the board of trustees oversee and scrutinise the work of the college more effectively by making sure the reports they receive on all facets of the college's work, including learners' outcomes, are clear, meaningful and easy to interpret. This will mean trustees will have all the information needed to ask challenging questions of senior managers. Additionally, ensure all members of the board receive the relevant training they require to carry out their role effectively.
- Strengthen aspects of quality assurance and the self-assessment process further in order to speed up the rate of improvement. The college can do this by more sharply identifying areas for development in the self-assessment report, using trend data better and making sure all targets in actions plans are clearly prioritised, measurable and focus better on the impact for learners.
- Analyse and report on the performance of different groups of learners more thoroughly so that managers can identify and take action on any gaps in achievement that may occur over time.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Requires improvement
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- Learners enjoy their learning and overall make at least expected progress in relation to their starting points. Where appropriate, they achieve relevant accredited foundation qualifications effectively linked to their individual learning programmes. A few learners at entry level make good progress and gain foundation or intermediate level qualifications in their vocational and independence skills. The number of learners who stay at the college to complete their programmes is very high. Learners' attendance is good.
- For non-accredited achievement, college data for 2011/12 indicate that the vast majority of learners are successful at achieving their medium-term individual learning targets. The college however is at an early stage in analysing achievement data and does not have sufficient information to identify how well learners achieved their targets in previous years. As a result, the extent to which all learners make progress is still hard to evaluate. Learners' long and

medium-term goals contained within individual learning plans are often too vague to show how learners are building on their prior knowledge.

- Learners' achievement of short-term personal skills targets across all subject areas is mostly good. The college's self-assessment recognises that while the recorded achievement of these skills is frequent, they do not all yet link well enough to learners' long-term goals to provide a more complete picture of learners' progress.
- The college is at an early stage in effectively analysing data to identify achievement gaps between different groups of learners. College data for 2011/12 suggest there were no significant differences in achievement according to age, gender and disability.
- Learners make good progress in developing their communication skills and in improving their behaviour. Learners communicate their needs to staff through the effective use of signing. They learn to interact with others by listening, responding to questions and working cooperatively to complete a learning activity.
- Overall, learners develop appropriate skills in mathematics, English and functional skills. They develop these skills particularly successfully within practical activities often because this provides a good everyday context. For example, they learn to recognise road signs to help them stay safe while travelling independently and to use money to purchase food in local shops.
- Learners are developing a wider array of work-related skills due to the increased opportunities for work experience within real work settings. Although a recent development, it is already helping a few learners to achieve their long-term goals and improve their future employment prospects. For example, one learner with autism has become much more flexible in his work patterns by not taking breaks at set times; another learner with communication difficulties now successfully socialises and interacts with his fellow workers at lunchtime.
- Most learners become more confident and independent in their everyday life and make informed choices about what they want to do after they leave college. Compared to previous years, only one of the five learners who left in 2011/12 was successful at progressing onto further education and/or voluntary work. The remaining four learners who left in 2011/12 continued their studies at Landmarks to enable them to make further progress towards a positive destination. For example, one learner is taking an advanced level qualification in horse care in the hope to secure employment as a groom in a stable yard.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teachers are well qualified. They plan to make tasks in lessons fun and as a result, learners enjoy lessons and most participate well in activities. Teachers' planning of lessons however, does not always take sufficient account of the range of all learners' abilities and therefore they miss opportunities to increase and record the progress learners make. This affects learners' outcomes because, although most learners who take accredited qualifications achieve them, their overall progress and progress towards non-accredited learning is often uneven and can be difficult to measure.
- Teachers and learning support assistants use questioning frequently to check learners' awareness of their individual targets within a lesson. The use of questioning by staff to deepen and extend learning however is less well developed. For example, a learner's target in a lesson was to recognise food that is good for you. The learner was chopping a vegetable and the teacher asked if this vegetable was healthy or not healthy. While the learner responded correctly, the teacher did not take the opportunity to check if the learner understood or recognised, or could identify, what other foods were healthy or less healthy.
- In the best lessons, teachers plan practical activities and subject targets carefully, which challenges learners' practical and social skills and independent learning. In these lessons, teachers take account of learners' views and balance this well with prioritising what it is they

need to learn. For example, in one lesson a teacher applied simple but effective strategies to encourage a learner to overcome his avid dislike of bus travel.

- In less effective lessons, teachers are not always clear about what subject skills learners could be developing in conjunction with their personal learning objectives. In addition, they do not clearly evaluate exactly how well learners have developed specific skills and knowledge or how future lessons can help accelerate and reinforce this learning. The open plan nature of several of the classrooms on the main farm site mean noise levels during some lessons is very distracting and impedes the progress and learning taking place.
- Many aspects of classroom learning support are good but the quality of some practice is less effective. Learning support assistants know their learners well and use praise and encouragement successfully to motivate them. In a significant minority of lessons however, learning support at times is over-directed and limits the opportunities for learners to maximise their independence and demonstrate better than average progress.
- Behavioural, communication and dyslexia support are good. Speech and language therapists are beginning to make a notable contribution to the progress learners make. In the majority of lessons, teachers use signing and symbols effectively to support learners' understanding and help them make choices. For example in a horse care lesson, the teacher skilfully and sensitively supported a very unsettled learner. This resulted in the learner calming down quickly and making good progress.
- The quality of assessment and reviews of learners' progress while improved, are still too variable. The assessment of learners' behavioural and communication support needs is comprehensive and results in good individualised support plans that set out clear priorities and strategies to inform each learners' programme of study. The reviews of learners' subject skill development and skills leading to independence are in some cases insufficiently detailed.
- Learners develop English, mathematics and functional skills to a reasonable level. Teachers make good use of naturally occurring routines in most practical lessons to reinforce learners' literacy and numeracy. For example, reading details about specific animals on prompt cards, counting scoops of food for individual animals and measuring wood for fencing. In several lessons, teachers miss the chance to reinforce and extend learners' knowledge of English and mathematics.
- The college has increased its information learning resources notably, although their use in creatively supporting learning within lessons is still in its infancy. Teachers and learners now have easier access to the Internet and learners' awareness and confidence in using technology as a social communication tool is growing.
- Advice and guidance for learners are effective. A comprehensive programme that focuses on increasing independence supports learners' progression well by providing relevant information and guidance on a range of topics including CV writing, form filling, interview skills and how to access local services. The college recognises teachers' recording of learners' formal transition plans and personal tutorial records sometimes lack sufficient detail.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The principal and senior management team have worked tirelessly since the last inspection to put in place a clear organisational structure and establish clearer quality systems to help drive forward improvement. As a result, managers have successfully improved several areas of the college's work, such as communication support for learners. In other key areas however, such as the strategic reporting of learners' performance over time, improvement has been less marked and/or it is still too early to judge the full impact of all management actions.
- The principal, along with senior managers and the board of trustees provide a clear, albeit short-term strategic vision for Landmarks with a view to relocate the entire college by

September 2014. Senior leaders have yet to secure funding for this ambitious plan and are in the process of articulating a strategy on how they intend to manage the recent and intended growth in learner numbers over the next three to five years.

- The role of the board of trustees as a supervisory body requires improvement. Trustees bring a wealth of educational experience to their role and they monitor the college's finances well. However, their monitoring of learners' outcomes, including that of different groups of learners, is insufficiently rigorous. Senior management reports to trustees are not always detailed enough or produced in an easy-to-interpret format that enable trustees to ask challenging questions of managers. Up until very recently, the programme of training for trustees has been too piecemeal. While trustees are supportive of senior managers, they have not appraised the principal's performance formally since her arrival in September 2010.
- Staff morale is high and staff at all levels share the principal's commitment to raise aspirations for learners at Landmarks. Senior leaders are steadily establishing a culture of high expectations and this, along with more coherent quality assurance processes, has ensured the college is now better placed to increase the rate of its improvement further.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment has improved progressively since the last inspection with college data showing an increasing proportion of lessons are good or better. The college self-assessment report recognises that despite these developments, teaching, learning and the recording of learners' progress requires further improvement to ensure it is consistently good and to increase the proportion of outstanding learning. Managers are in the process of strengthening the college's performance management systems to aid this endeavour.
- Managers observe the quality of lessons frequently through a well-established observation process. An intensive one-to-one coaching programme for teachers, increased peer observations, and useful mini quality checks on teaching and learning themes, such as session planning, are beginning to aid the sharing of good practice amongst staff. However, it is too early to judge the full impact of these approaches.
- The college provides a comprehensive programme of training and development for staff. The number of qualified teaching staff has increased notably since the last inspection with most staff having achieved or working towards teaching qualifications. All staff have received training in how to manage learners with very challenging behaviour. As a result, the management of learners' behaviour is good and the number of incidents relating to behaviour is relatively few.
- Some of the teaching accommodation at the college's main site is not fit for purpose. Classrooms and the on-site kitchen are too small for the number of learners. The nature of the site's open plan layout means noise levels often become distracting and impede learning. Other accommodation, including the external farm buildings, provides a good, spacious and realistic working environment in which to learn.
- Managers have improved the use of data notably with the implementation of an electronic management information system, providing staff with easier access to information and enabling them to track learners' progress better. While data is more readily accessible, the aggregation, analyses and use of data at strategic level to inform decision-making and direct improvement, is underdeveloped. Managers do not use trend data sufficiently within their self-assessment report to demonstrate improvements and impact over time.
- Inspectors agreed with many strengths and areas for development identified within the self-assessment report, although several strengths were overplayed. Action plans to target improvement are detailed and reviewed frequently but are not all clearly prioritised or have sharply defined, measurable targets by which to review the impact of actions taken.
- The college uses the views of learners, parents and staff well to help them improve the quality of learners' experience. The college listens carefully to learners' views collated through surveys and through a well-structured learner representative forum. For example, learners requested sports bags to store their equipment, a basketball net so they can play sport at break times and diaries to help them organise their time, all of which were supplied swiftly by the college.
- The college has reduced its previous overemphasis on accreditation and now provides an appropriately diverse curriculum for its learners. Partnership working with employers and schools

is good and enhances learners' educational and work experience. For example, a recent collaboration with a large mainstream school has enabled learners to access additional resources such as a performing arts studio and sports facilities. Links with one local employer have provided work experience for learners in a local historic visitors' centre with involvement in conservation work, horticulture and through the centre's café.

- The college has effectively increased the learners' awareness of equality and diversity themes by involving learners directly in related projects. For example, teachers used a 'The Happy Heart' initiative successfully to reinforce learners understanding of treating others with kindness and respect. In 2011/12, learners were involved in the production of a DVD on cyber bullying which helped raise their awareness of some of the potential dangers of social networking.
- Managers' analysis, review and reporting of equalities data, including the performance of different groups of learners, require improvement. Currently, managers generate much data but it is not always used or presented in a meaningful way to help them, or trustees, to monitor potential gaps or differences in learners' achievement.
- The college meets its statutory requirements for the safeguarding of learners. Learners all receive appropriately tailored individual risk assessments and inspectors observed learners working confidently and safely in a range of on-site and off-site locations. Health and safety arrangements overall are adequate. Staff have received updated safeguarding awareness training and all staff have received training in behaviour management. More updated training for trustees is in place for this term.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

Landmarks College									
Inspection grades are based on a provider's performance: 1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Requires improvement 4: Inadequate	Overall	14-16 Learning programmes	16-18 Learning programmes	19+ Learning programmes	Apprenticeships	Other work- based learning	Employability	Foundation Learning	Community learning
Overall effectiveness	3		3	3					
Outcomes for learners	3		3	3					
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	3		3	3					
The effectiveness of leadership and management	3		3	3					

Provider details

Landmarks 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: 18
	Part-time: 1
Principal/CEO	Dawn Green
Date of previous inspection	March 2011
Website address	www.landmarks.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	10	12	0	1	0	0	0	0
Part-time	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
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:	N/A							

Additional socio-economic information

Landmarks is a land-based college located in Creswell, north east Derbyshire. Landmarks is a registered charity and company limited by guarantee. The main base for the college is a 20 acre working farm with purpose built workshops. Learner numbers have risen by over 50% since the last inspection. All learners have a learning difficulty and/or disability and an increasing number have profound autistic spectrum disorders and challenging behaviour. Most learners live within a 25 mile radius of the college and travel on a daily basis. The college currently has 74 learners in total of which 49 are mostly funded by social services and were not in the scope of this inspection. Of the 25 SFA funded learners, 76% are male and 1% of minority ethnic heritage.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector

Deborah Vaughan-Jenkins HMI

One of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and two additional inspectors, assisted by the deputy 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 and online questionnaires to gather the views of learners and employers; these views are reflected throughout the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. 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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