

# Foxes Academy

## Independent specialist college

<b>Inspection dates</b>		14-16 May 2013
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>This inspection:</b>	<b>Outstanding-1</b>
	Previous inspection:	Outstanding-1
Outcomes for learners		Outstanding-1
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Outstanding-1
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Outstanding-1

### Summary of key findings for learners

#### This provider is outstanding because:

- Learners achieve outstanding results in all aspects of their learning programmes.
- Very successful work placements prepare learners for gaining employment on leaving the academy.
- Learners make excellent progress in developing their independence and communication skills, enabling them to be confident members of their community.
- The academy achieves great success in enabling learners to move on into a range of independent living environments.
- Therapeutic support is highly skilled and extremely effective in improving communication, adapting equipment, managing behaviour, reducing stress and improving concentration.
- The outstanding systems for recording learners' progress ensure targets to further extend learners' skills and understanding are shared across all parts of the academy and revised frequently.
- Leaders and managers provide a clear direction and rigorously promote high standards of teaching and learning.
- The high level of cooperation, coordination and communication between teachers, residential staff and therapists enables learners to benefit from highly personalised learning programmes.
- Strong performance management, effective observation of learning and good professional development provide staff with the necessary skills and expertise to ensure learners are successful.
- The realistic work environment, excellent use of the wider community and the diverse curriculum provide a wide range of learning opportunities to develop employability and independence.
- Excellent safeguarding arrangements keep learners well informed and provide them with good strategies to keep safe.

## Full report

### What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Increase literacy and numeracy training for non-specialist staff and ensure specialist support staff levels are sufficient.
- Emphasise the integration of gender and ethnicity more strongly into equality and diversity teaching and learning.
- Continue to develop the formal involvement of learners in evaluating and improving the provision by further developing their advocacy skills.

### Inspection judgements

<b>Outcomes for learners</b>	Outstanding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Outcomes for learners are outstanding. Learners make excellent progress in developing communication skills and self-awareness so that they develop a powerful understanding of their rights and responsibilities. The acquisition of spoken skills is highly valued by learners and nearly all are able speak fluently about the progress they are making and their aspirations for the future. Learners exercise their roles as members of different work and social communities with hard work, maturity and grace.</li> <li>▪ Nearly all learners are enrolled on accredited learning courses for the majority of their learning programme. For the last two years, all learners have been successful in gaining their qualifications and making progress to more advanced levels as they progress through the academy.</li> <li>▪ Learners make very good progress towards realising and exceeding their planned learning and independence goals. Over the last two years, all learners achieved virtually all of their targets. Targets are suitably challenging and cover all aspects of the learners' experience at the academy. Learners meet the challenging demands in their daily routines with enthusiasm and energy.</li> <li>▪ Learners make very good progress in their employability skills. They take responsibility for arriving at their placement on time and ensuring all that they need for work is readily available. They are increasingly able to take on new challenges in their work placements. One learner was able to demonstrate initiative in a busy café by recognising where help was required and stepping in to undertake routine tasks that regular employees were too busy to complete.</li> <li>▪ The academy collates and analyses the performance of all learners at the end of each year. Information gathered clearly shows that there are no significant variations in achievement between different groups of learners in relation to learners on courses at different levels or when considering their length of programme, disability, gender or ethnicity.</li> <li>▪ The academy has an outstanding record in preparing its learners to move on into more independent living environments. In the last year 95% of learners progressed to living semi-independently after living with parents or in 'looked after' accommodation when starting at the academy. It is equally successful in supporting learners to progress into work. At the end of the last academic year, 18 of the 21 leavers found either paid or voluntary employment within three months of leaving the academy. Twelve of these leavers also took on additional education and training at their local college of further education.</li> </ul>	
<b>The quality of teaching, learning and assessment</b>	Outstanding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Teaching, learning and assessment are outstanding and lead to the outstanding outcomes that learners achieve. Staff are very highly motivated. They want the best for learners and expect a</li> </ul>	

great deal from them within their capacities. Learners rise to the challenges offered them, work extremely hard, thrive on the demands placed on them and progress well as a result.

- Learner support is very good. Staff know learners well and are skilled at motivating them and developing their abilities. Support staff for English and mathematics are usually well briefed and competent. However, where the range of skill levels is wide or learners are working in separate spaces, the levels of support are not always high enough for all learners.
- Therapeutic support is excellent. Support is plentiful, skilled and very effective in improving communication, adapting equipment to make practical tasks possible for learners, managing behaviour, reducing stress levels and improving concentration. Very good communications ensure all staff meet learners' therapeutic needs very well.
- Teaching and residential staff are highly skilled. They have a very well-informed, detailed understanding of learners' skills and needs. They set wholly appropriate individualised targets and devise excellent learning activities that increase learners' abilities. Staff use questions particularly effectively to help learners think and discover answers for themselves.
- Learning resources are very good, particularly for communication strategies. The use of assistive technology is increasing and a manager is now working to maximise staff skills in supporting the use of electronic memory or communication aids by every learner who would find them useful.
- Learners take part in a wide variety of very stimulating activities, sports and visits in addition to their working days. They frequently enter national and local competitions and events. Learners are involved in charity work, performances and celebrations that all develop their skills further and help them plan for life after the academy.
- Systems for establishing learners' starting points and monitoring their progress are excellent. Electronic records of progress are immediately available across the college and allow very quick updating of targets to extend further learners' skills and understanding. Recording of each learner's progress is comprehensive and clearly shown on a diagram that learners, parents and carers easily understand.
- Feedback to learners is excellent. Staff give frequent, encouraging verbal feedback to learners about their achievements which learners use well to continue to progress.
- The development of learners' speaking, listening and communication skills is outstanding. English, mathematics and information and communication technology are fully integrated into all vocational, independence skills and practical activities. However, not all non-specialist staff have the necessary range of literacy teaching strategies.
- Information, advice and guidance are excellent. Learners and their parents or carers benefit from extremely effective programmes of transitions to work and independent living. In regular tutorials, specialist staff work closely with learners on carefully designed personalised programmes with demanding targets.
- The promotion of equality and diversity in relation to disability and age is outstanding. Learners contribute greatly to the community's understanding of learning difficulties by the very high profile that they have locally as able and reliable employees. Learners celebrate diversity well and work in a very positive atmosphere of respect for difference. However, learners' awareness and understanding of gender and ethnicity issues are not so fully developed.

### **The effectiveness of leadership and management**

Outstanding

- Leadership and management are outstanding because since the last inspection the leadership team has further developed the outstanding provision. All leaders have an unrelenting and rigorous approach to raising standards and improving the quality of the provision for learners and preparing them well for life after college. Leaders and managers continue to adapt the provision to meet the increasingly wide ability range and complex needs of learners. Day-to-day management is strong and all staff know their role in improving outcomes for learners.

- Directors have excellent experience and provide good support and challenge. In particular, they support the leadership team well in their responses to changes in funding arrangements and the potential impact this may have on the recruitment of learners. They know learners and staff well and use their professional knowledge and contacts to ensure vocational staff have a good understanding of the changing needs of the hospitality industry.
- Performance management is outstanding. The regular supervision of staff and developmental approach to the monitoring of teaching, learning and support successfully encourage staff to improve their practice. Appraisals for staff and managers are based on clear performance measures that link closely to the challenging targets set by the leadership team.
- The determined approach to improving learning throughout the academy continues to be successful, with a very high proportion of teaching and learning now good or outstanding. Observations of learning and feedback to staff clearly focus on the learner experience and the impact of the work of teaching and support staff.
- The academy makes excellent use of outstanding teachers to run workshops based on areas for improvement identified through observations. Where necessary, decisive action ensures that any teaching that is less than good does not disadvantage learners.
- The curriculum is outstanding. The real work environment within the hotel, together with the close cooperation between all staff, supports the outstanding progress made by learners. They benefit from extensive access to the wider community, the high quality work placements and the highly individualised approach to planning of learning.
- Resources across the academy are good. The kitchen and food preparation area are generally fit for purpose, although inspectors reported that for some activities the space available to learners was insufficient. Residential accommodation is good and the use of bedsits within the supported accommodation is particularly effective in developing confidence and independent living skills.
- Regular training and updating ensure staff have the essential skills and knowledge required to support learners in achieving their goals. Managers encourage staff to gain professional qualifications to improve their practice or prepare them for new roles within the academy. Senior leaders benefit from external support and guidance from an external management specialist.
- The self-assessment process involves all staff and is effective in raising standards. The excellent use of data supports judgements made in the report. Although at an early stage, learners now have greater involvement in evaluating provision and making suggestions for improvements.
- Arrangements to promote equality and diversity are very good. The academy carefully monitors the achievement of different groups of learners and makes very good use of the hotel, work experience and wider community to reinforce a realistic understanding of equality and prepare learners for when they progress to semi-independent or supported living. Progress in recruiting learners from black and minority ethnic groups is excellent, with nearly a fifth of learners recruited for 2013/14 coming from this group compared with none in 2008. The termly quality checks identify the progress made towards achieving identified targets.
- Safeguarding arrangements are outstanding. All learners have a very good awareness of how to keep themselves safe and what to do if they feel at risk or need advice and guidance. The designated safeguarding officer and her deputy have excellent practical partnership arrangements with the local community organisations, including the police and the West Somerset Keeping Safe Partnership. The provider meets its statutory arrangements for safeguarding learners.
- Good communication between residential, education and therapy staff ensures that any concerns are reported and discussed quickly and decisive action is taken if necessary. Risk assessments are thorough, reviewed regularly and highly individualised. The safe use of mobile phones and the internet, including social networks, is a high priority for the academy, learners have a very good awareness of the potential dangers and are quick to seek advice and support if necessary.

## Record of Main Findings (RMF)

### Foxes Academy

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

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
<b>Foundation Learning</b>	<b>1</b>

## Provider details

<b>Provider name</b>	
<b>Type of provider</b>	Independent specialist college
<b>Age range of learners</b>	16+
<b>Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year</b>	Full-time: 79
	Part-time: 1
<b>Principal/CEO</b>	Mrs Sharon Bowden
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	October 2006
<b>Website address</b>	www.foxesacademy.ac.uk

<b>Provider information at the time of the inspection</b>								
<b>Main course or learning programme level</b>	<b>Level 1 or below</b>		<b>Level 2</b>		<b>Level 3</b>		<b>Level 4 and above</b>	
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
<b>Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)</b>	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
<b>Full-time</b>	7	71	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Part-time</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age</b>	<b>Intermediate</b>		<b>Advanced</b>		<b>Higher</b>			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		
<b>Number of learners aged 14-16</b>	N/A							
<b>Number of community learners</b>	N/A							
<b>Number of employability learners</b>	N/A							
<b>Funding received from</b>	Education Funding Agency (EFA)							
<b>At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ none</li> </ul>							

## Additional socio-economic information

Foxes Academy is an independent residential specialist college for young people with learning difficulties who have an interest in working in the hospitality or catering industry. In addition to their learning difficulties, some students have additional disabilities including hearing impairments, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), autistic spectrum disorder (ASD), Charge Syndrome, Fragile X and Prader-Willi. The college is based in Minehead, Somerset, and takes students from across the country.

## Information about this inspection

**Lead inspector**

Nigel Evans HMI

One of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and two additional inspectors, assisted by the Funding and Marketing Manager 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, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of learners, parents 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 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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