

Homefield College

Specialist college

Inspection dates		26–28 November 2013
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Good-2
	Previous inspection:	Good-2
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:

- Learners make good progress in developing their confidence and independence skills. They become more able to travel independently, make choices and direct their lives.
- Teachers, support staff and therapists work well together to reduce levels of support for learners, to help them to manage their behaviour more effectively and to promote their communication skills.
- Each learner has a unique programme and the college is very responsive to individual needs, which leads to effective learning.
- Much learning is delivered in community and realistic work enterprises which helps learners to become increasingly comfortable talking to members of the public and dealing with new situations.
- Performance management is effective in improving the quality of the provision.

This is not yet an outstanding provider because:

- The college does not promote the development of learners' English and mathematics skills well enough.
- Learners do not have sufficient opportunities to interact with each other in lessons as much of the work takes place between individual learners and staff.
- The review of long-term goals is insufficient and the college does not evaluate sufficiently information about the destination of learners when they finish their programmes.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Improve the teaching of English and mathematics by providing relevant and appropriate resources for learning and better training for staff. The college should also spread the good practice that exists in some lessons to use naturally occurring opportunities to reinforce learners' understanding of English and mathematics.
- Ensure staff plan sufficient opportunities for learners to interact with each other within sessions so that they learn from each other as well as from staff.
- Following the extended period of initial assessment, the college should work with parents or carers and learners to review the appropriateness of the originally stated long-term goals. At the end of the learners' programmes, the college should carry out greater analysis of the data it holds on learners' destinations against their long-term goals in order to inform future planning.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Good
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- Overall learners make good progress from their starting points. Most learners have challenging targets, which help them to increase their ability to make confident, personal choices. Learners' ability to manage their own behaviour improves very well while they are at college. They enjoy learning and recognise the significant progress they are making.
- Learners are highly motivated by the practical nature of their learning activities. In a café enterprise learners were progressing very well. They were able to take orders from customers and to serve food and drinks using appropriate customer service skills. One learner showed good development in using money skills as he used a till and gave change correctly.
- Students are highly effective as ambassadors for people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Conduct during their regular interaction with members of the public in community venues is exemplary.
- Achievement rates for learners are good. Learners achieve the majority of their individual targets. Increasing numbers of learners are taking accredited qualifications and success rates are generally good.
- Learners' personal confidence is developed well through good use of commercial enterprises, regular visits to community venues and planned activities in residential settings. Learners also improve their ability to travel independently. One learner spoken to during inspection has built up his confidence and understanding sufficiently to be able to cross the road without assistance. Another learner is able to travel to local shops on a dark evening for the first time with staff following at a distance.
- Learners develop social skills and a range of transferable employability skills including effective communication, time-keeping and working with others. In a carefully supervised archery session, learners follow instructions precisely, take turns, compare scores and monitor their own improvement. The activity engages learners very well and all demonstrates very good progress towards their personal targets.
- Learners' progression into further education and training on leaving the college is satisfactory. A small but gradually increasing number progress into voluntary employment. The college is working hard to increase the small number of learners gaining external work experience to improve opportunities for paid employment on leaving college where appropriate.

- Independent living skills are developed well and help prepare learners to progress to supported living in the community. Learners take turns very well to propose a meal in a session to plan menus for the following week. They show great respect for each other asking if other residents liked the meal. They check systematically what ingredients they have in stock and prepare shopping lists. One learner recorded carefully the agreed menu for the week and displayed it for others on the kitchen notice board.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
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- Staff know their learners well and generally have high expectations of them. Learning support assistants and teaching staff are skilled at giving learners an appropriate amount of time, based on their needs and abilities, to respond to questions and to carry out tasks. For example, a support assistant stood back and allowed a learner to pay for his goods in a very busy shop with a large queue building up behind him. He spent a long time searching for his wallet and then handed over an incorrect sum of money; however this activity allowed him to develop his independence skills well.
- Staff encourage learners to take well-managed risks; for example a learner prepared a cup of coffee independently using a steam machine for a customer in the college's community internet café. In a very few cases staff do not challenge learners sufficiently, particularly the more able, to achieve to their maximum potential.
- Teachers do not always plan well enough to enable learners to interact with each other, to evaluate each other's work and to take more ownership of their learning. In too many sessions, the main lines of communication are between learners and staff and not between learners themselves.
- In the better practical and community sessions staff integrate useful and meaningful activities to develop learners' skills in mathematics and English. However, in too many lessons they do not plan activities well enough to improve these skills and the worksheets they give to learners are not always at an appropriate level.
- Reviews of learning are good and take place regularly. Staff refer to learners' objectives at relevant stages within a lesson and use images, symbols, photographs and short video clips to recall and recap learning well. Annual reviews of progress provide a good, evaluative picture of the skills learners have developed and highlight areas requiring further improvement.
- Teachers and support staff are suitably qualified and experienced. However, currently there is no member of staff with sufficient expertise to deliver English and mathematics and to raise the awareness of the integration of these skills across the wider curriculum.
- Staff use information from learners' earlier educational settings well to inform planning for new learners at the start of the academic year. Additionally they assess learners' abilities well against a very wide range of criteria; however the current system for measuring learners' starting points is overly complicated. Because of the lengthy assessment process, a few new learners do not receive specific objectives for learning until late into the autumn term.
- The college's speech and language therapist works well with the teaching staff to ensure communication is a high priority within the curriculum. Specific communication targets and clear communication strategies, along with the use of signing and symbols where needed, lead to all staff having a good understanding of how best to promote effective communication. Good links to parents and carers ensure communication strategies are shared well with the home environment to consolidate learning.
- Teachers use the college's enterprises and general community facilities well to develop learners' skills. Much of the curriculum takes place in real life environments such as shops, leisure centres, cafes, banks and the post office and enables learners to interact well with members of the public and to cope with a variety of different settings.

- Staff provide for individual needs well and develop a unique programme of learning for each learner. They manage learners' behaviour well and use sensitive techniques to diffuse potentially difficult situations. Staff introduce learners to aspects of the wider world by focusing on naturally occurring events such as cultural festivals; however this is not always reinforced sufficiently to ensure their full understanding.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The senior leadership team sets clear priorities for staff which focus on providing a good learning experience for students. Restructuring of management and staff has strengthened the college's ability to deliver good quality provision. Communication is effective. Staff are clear about what is expected, roles and responsibilities are well defined and teams work well together.
- The board of trustees provides effective oversight of the college. A greater focus on training for trustees within the last eighteen months has helped them to carry out this role. The curriculum committee is the main vehicle for monitoring the standard of education. The board has recognised the need for more trustees to be involved in this role and plans are in place to deal with this. A robust system is in place to enable trustees to appraise the principal against a clear set of targets.
- Performance management arrangements for staff are increasingly effective because of changes to ensure poor practice is identified quickly and action taken. Managers observe teachers and support staff regularly and they receive prompt additional training if their work is judged less than good. Where the training does not lead to improvement quickly enough, capability procedures are started.
- Staff benefit from a wide range of professional development and this has contributed well to improvements in teaching and learning. All session leaders are appropriately qualified. Training from behaviour management and other specialists helps staff to develop a range of strategies to work with learners. The college supplements this by the use of external therapists or other professionals to address specific needs of learners.
- A thorough self-assessment process helps the college to identify areas for further improvement. The views of staff and learners are incorporated well into this process and parents or carers are invited to give their views via questionnaires. The self-assessment report and quality improvement plan sent to inspectors correctly identified areas that require further improvement, such as some of the literacy and numeracy work. Parents spoken to during the inspection were very positive about their experience of the college, with just a few comments about how communication with them could be improved even further.
- The curriculum is very well matched to the needs of learners. Each learner has an individualised timetable, which includes lessons in the college, sessions in college-run enterprises that are used by the general public, and extensive learning in real-life situations out in the community. This complex set of timetabling arrangements is well managed. The college responds swiftly to the individual needs of learners; one parent spoke of the introduction of music therapy to help his son.
- Learners benefit from effective partnership work carried out by the college. Work placements with employers help learners to develop work-related skills, although the range of employers is limited. The college has set up an effective partnership arrangement to better meet the needs of a small number of learners with extremely challenging behaviour. This allows initial outreach work to take place with the learners until they are ready to be integrated into the college sessions. Partnerships with local authorities and health services also benefit learners.

- The college monitors carefully the achievement of different groups of learners and the gap between those with severe and moderate learning difficulties has been narrowed very successfully. A culture of respect and tolerance permeates the college.
- The college does not analyse sufficiently the destination data it holds on learners that have left the college to contribute to future planning. This is not helped by the fact that the long-term goals of learners are not reviewed after the original goal is recorded.
- Safeguarding procedures meet legal requirements. All staff receive safeguarding training annually and managers with specific responsibility are trained to an appropriate level. Incidents are recorded and appropriate external authorities are informed. The main incident recording form does not always make sufficiently clear action that has been taken and when a case has been closed, although this is evidenced in other documents.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

Homefield College

<p>Inspection grades are based on a provider's performance:</p> <p>1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Requires improvement 4: Inadequate</p>	Overall	16-19 study programmes	19+ Learning programmes
Overall effectiveness	2	2	2
Outcomes for learners	2	2	2
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	2	2	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management	2	2	2

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Independent living and leisure skills	2

Provider details

Type of provider	Independent specialist college							
Age range of learners	16+							
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	Full-time: 49							
	Part-time: 0							
Principal/CEO	Gerry Short							
Date of previous inspection	October 2008							
Website address	www.homefieldcollege.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	
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
Full-time	3	51	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Part-time	0	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Number of traineeships	16-19		19+		Total			
	N/A		N/A		N/A			
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		
Number of learners aged 14-16	N/A							
Full-time	N/A							
Part-time	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"> ▪ MacIntyre Care. 							

Contextual information

Homefield is an independent specialist college and registered charity for students with learning disabilities and additional difficulties including communication. Around 65% of the learners are on the autistic spectrum. The main site is a residential setting within the large village of Sileby, which is a few miles from Leicester and Loughborough. The majority of learners are from the Midlands and attend on a day basis, twelve attend on a residential basis and a small number receive outreach provision in their own homes and in their local community. Homefield also provides supported living and residential care which were not in the scope of this inspection.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector	Sue Harrison HMI
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One of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and two additional inspectors, assisted by the assistant 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 interviews, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of learners and parents and carers; 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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