

# Regent College

## Independent specialist college

<b>Inspection dates</b>		5–7 February 2014
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>This inspection:</b>	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:

- Learners make good progress towards developing independence, managing their own behaviour and communicating with others.
- Teaching is highly effective because most lessons are based around practical learning in realistic settings in the local community.
- Specialist therapists, teachers and support staff work together very effectively to identify learners' individual needs before they join the college, plan programmes to suit their potential and carry out regular reviews on learners' progress.
- Learners benefit from a wide range of work placements and volunteering activities.
- Transition arrangements are effective at preparing learners for the next stage of their lives when they leave the college.
- The quality of provision has improved substantially since the last inspection as a result of increased rigour in monitoring the learners' experience.
- The college's advisory board provides a good level of challenge to senior managers to ensure high expectations are set and met.

#### This is not yet an outstanding provider because:

- The most successful and innovative practice in teaching and learning is not spread sufficiently across all areas.
- A few staff lack skill and confidence to ensure learning targets are meaningful to students. Where this is the case, learners are less clear on the progress they have made or how to improve further.
- The development of learners' literacy skills is not as successful as their wider communication skills.

## Full report

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

- Raise the proportion of outstanding lessons by ensuring that lesson observers are trained to identify the precise characteristics of the very best teaching and learning, and work with teachers to share such good practice across the college.
- Improve the identification and recording of targets to ensure they are consistently clear, precise and meaningful to learners, so that learners understand better what they need to do to achieve them.
- Increase staff expertise in the teaching of literacy so that learners' literacy levels are developed to their full potential.

### Inspection judgements

<b>Outcomes for learners</b>	Good
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- Learners make good progress in relation to their starting points and their long-term goals and aspirations. Goals set are generally appropriate and challenging, and encourage learners to have high aspirations for their future lives.
- External accreditation is matched well to individual learners' needs and success rates are high. One learner has gained a coaching award that he needs in order to volunteer to support school soccer teams. In both accredited and non-accredited programmes, there are no significant differences in the achievement of different groups of learners.
- Learners make good progress in using a range of strategies, including speech, symbols and Makaton signing, to communicate more effectively with others. Non-verbal learners use signs, symbols and objects of reference, such as a dinner plate to indicate the refectory, to carry out tasks with increasing confidence in practical settings in the community.
- In a small minority of cases, learners' progress is hampered because the communication strategies are not applied with sufficient consistency. In one lesson, a learner was being directed by two staff at the same time, one of whom used inaccurate signing. As a result the learner was confused and progress was slow.
- Learners' ability to manage their own behaviour more effectively is developed well as they progress through their college programmes. A first-year learner is already using a symbolised 'traffic lights' system to reduce her anxieties by communicating her needs to staff. A third-year learner is much more confident to describe her feelings, which helps her to learn more effectively. Previously, she was unable to let others know when she was feeling anxious and unable to understand tasks or situations.
- Most learners make good progress in increasing their numeracy skills, such as recognition and use of money in everyday situations, and counting skills. Literacy skills are not developed sufficiently well for the most able learners.
- Learners gain useful work-related skills including timekeeping, teamwork and completing tasks with care and accuracy. The college is successful at finding placements near to learners' homes so they can continue to develop skills and contribute to their local community when they leave college. For example, two learners work in the computer recycling section at the local university science park. They clean hard drives, examine and grade cabling and help prepare machines for reuse in a local community centre.
- In another example, a group of learners who have been volunteering at a local country park now have good work skills that they can use in their future lives. They confidently and accurately sort seedling pots, clear composting debris and serve visitors in the cafes.

- Learners gain increased independence skills in carrying out everyday tasks, such as personal care or preparing a drink. Most become more independent in their own homes and a few move on to supported living. Transition planning for when learners leave college is good and includes sourcing opportunities for students to work or volunteer, and where appropriate attend a further education college.
- All learners follow a travel skills programme, which prepares them for safer and more confident travel. The more able learn supported travel routines, which increases their autonomy during and after leaving college. One learner who used to travel only in taxis can now travel by bus to a variety of local venues.

### The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Good teaching, learning and assessment ensure that learners make substantial progress. The overall 'satisfactory' quality of teaching reported at the last inspection has been significantly improved. Teachers, therapists and support staff are well motivated and have high expectations of what learners can achieve.
- Good lesson planning and effective teaching is well matched to the individual needs and aspirations of learners. Staff use their skills effectively to plan purposeful, challenging and practical sessions, most of which take place in context in community settings. In a small minority of cases there is insufficient planning for alternative activities to replace those that have had to be cancelled for valid reasons such as inclement weather.
- Assessment processes have recently been strengthened and are now good. Thorough initial, baseline and continuing assessment practices inform individual learning, behaviour and support plans. Therapists work closely with teachers to design learners' targets around their aspirations and long-term needs, including communication and behaviour management.
- Most targets set are challenging, based on the outcome of rigorous assessment and are well monitored. However, a minority are not meaningful or use complicated language that is not accessible for learners. In these cases progress is not effectively captured.
- Speech and language therapists work very well with staff to ensure that communication has a high priority throughout the curriculum. The application and promotion of communication strategies is highly effective. For example, the use of visual time lines ensures activities and timetables are well understood and aid concentration for those learners with more severe and complex disabilities.
- Highly effective behaviour-management strategies enable learners to participate fully in all activities. As a result of significant progress in managing incidents and anxiety a few learners have had their support needs reduced since starting at the college.
- Teachers use innovative approaches in technology to motivate learners, for example, in the media suite where learners work together to plan, film and edit interviews and programmes. These are then broadcast around the college and, on occasion, to the public. Most staff refer to learners' targets at relevant stages in sessions and successfully use images, symbols, photographs and short video clips to recall and recap learning.
- Annual reviews of progress provide a good, evaluative picture of the skills learners have developed and highlight areas requiring further improvement.
- Close monitoring of learners, including a daily morning review, ensures that fluctuating medical and emotional needs are met each day. Teachers and support staff give learners frequent, positive and encouraging verbal feedback in sessions. A culture of learners evaluating their progress helps them to assess their own learning in most lessons.
- In the better practical and community sessions staff integrate useful and meaningful activities to develop learners' skills in numeracy and English. However, in a minority of lessons, they do not plan activities well enough to improve literacy skills for the more able learners.
- Information, advice and guidance are good. Each student has a support coordinator and key worker who provide effective advocacy advice and guidance. Together they rigorously monitor

learning programmes and oversee learners' transition through the college. The majority of staff provide suitable levels of support. However, in a few cases, staff inhibit learning by intervening too quickly and not enabling the students to learn from their mistakes.

- The much-improved and expanded work-experience placements, using a wide range of local employers, ensure that learners have good opportunities to gain work-related skills for their future life. Staff effectively promote learners' awareness of health and safety in college and in the work environment. Guidance from risk assessments is implemented consistently.
- The college promotes equality and diversity well through a culture of respect and sensitivity for all. Relationships are good and characterised by high levels of respect. Learners set a very positive role model for the achievements of people with learning disabilities in the wider community.

## The effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- Leadership and management have improved considerably since the last inspection and are now good. Effective action taken to address weaknesses has ensured that the quality of provision for learners is now good. The overwhelming majority of staff support the changes. They speak of higher expectations, clearer lines of communication and greater accountability, backed up by effective support and staff development.
- The advisory board provides a rigorous level of challenge to senior managers, as well as clear strategic direction. Following the previous inspection, the parent company recognised the need to strengthen educational expertise on the board and this has been actioned effectively. Members monitor the learners' experience regularly and have a good understanding of the college's strengths and areas for further improvement. They meet frequently and agree clear action points for managers to report back on. The board is currently seeking to extend its expertise further in terms of representation from employers and the local minority ethnic community.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is now good as a result of regular monitoring and clear actions to follow up identified weaknesses. Observations identify lessons that are less than good, leading to specific training for staff and mentoring to help them improve. Where this is not successful, capability procedures are followed promptly. Staff currently do not have sufficient opportunities to observe each other's practice in order to spread the best examples of teaching and support work throughout the college.
- The college's self-assessment processes are thorough and action plans to address identified issues generally lead to improvement. Inspectors found a few areas where further training is required for some staff, for example, not all staff are confident in how to use target setting with learners. However, the quality assurance cycle now in place has led to significant improvements in many weaknesses identified at the last inspection, and some improvement in all areas.
- The views of learners and stakeholders are used well to inform developments. Parents and carers spoken to during the inspection were very positive about their experience of the college.
- The curriculum meets the needs of learners well. Learners benefit from the college's extensive partnership work within the local community, for example with a country park, a football club and a university. A major strength of the college is the extent of learning carried out in realistic community settings.
- Staffing levels and expertise are appropriate, and the college also employs sessional staff with specific expertise, for example, to teach performing arts and sports activities. However, the college does not have a literacy functional skills tutor trained to a high enough level, although all tutors have had basic training in this subject.
- The college is effective in most aspects of its approach to equality and diversity. It works well with a range of partners to develop learners' understanding and the college is permeated by a culture of tolerance and respect. Data are analysed thoroughly to check whether any group of learners is achieving less well than others. Recruitment patterns are also analysed. Actions to

increase the number of learners from minority ethnic groups have met with limited success. The college recognises the need to intensify its efforts and strengthen further its links with these communities.

- Safeguarding measures meet statutory requirements. Appropriate training is in place for staff and the college has good links with external agencies, including the local safeguarding board. Risk assessments are thorough. Appropriate incident recording is in place and referrals to external agencies are recorded and tracked. Monthly meetings take place to review incidents and identify any patterns, leading to action such as changes to a learner's programme where appropriate. The college has a number of safeguarding recording systems in place; however, there is currently no overarching tracking sheet to provide a simplified method of demonstrating quickly and easily the chronology of incident reporting.

## Record of Main Findings (RMF)

### Regent College

Inspection grades are based on a provider's performance:  1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Requires improvement 4: Inadequate	Overall	14-16 part-time provision	14-16 full-time provision	16-19 study programmes	Traineeships	19+ Learning programmes	Apprenticeships	Employability	Community learning
Overall effectiveness	2	NA	NA	NA	NA	2	NA	NA	NA
Outcomes for learners	2	NA	NA	NA	NA	2	NA	NA	NA
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	2	NA	NA	NA	NA	2	NA	NA	NA
The effectiveness of leadership and management	2	NA	NA	NA	NA	2	NA	NA	NA

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

## Provider details

<b>Type of provider</b>	Independent specialist college							
<b>Age range of learners</b>	19+							
<b>Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year</b>	Full-time: 27							
	Part-time: 0							
<b>Principal/CEO</b>	Mrs Wendy Williams							
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	March 2011							
<b>Website address</b>	www.regentcollegestoke.co.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>	
<b>Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)</b>	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
<b>Full-time</b>	N/A	31	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 traineeships</b>	16-19		19+		Total			
	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+	16-18	19+
	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Number of learners aged 14-16</b>								
<b>Full-time</b>	N/A							
<b>Part-time</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>							

## Contextual information

Regent College is a small, independent day college for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The majority of learners are on the autistic spectrum and have behaviour issues. The college is situated in Stoke-on-Trent and operates from one campus. The college is part of Shelton Care Limited, a privately owned company. Oversight is provided by an advisory board. The college mission is 'developing independence in an adult world, through communication, vocational, social and life skills'.

## Information about this inspection

**Lead inspector**

Sue Harrison Her Majesty's Inspector

One of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and two additional inspectors, assisted by the Director of Teaching and Learning 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 and parents; 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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