

Farleigh Further Education College – Swindon

Independent specialist college

Inspection dates		30 April–2 May 2014
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:

- Students achieve well and make good progress towards developing independence.
- Therapeutic support and development are excellent because therapists work very effectively with staff, parents and learners.
- Students benefit from high levels of individual attention and personalised learning programmes that develop their independence and give them access to a good range of learning and social experiences.
- Arrangements for students leaving the college are particularly good because the advice, guidance and support students receive is good, as is the practical support provided.
- The enthusiastic and motivated staff provide a high level of appropriate support for students and reinforce high standards of behaviour.
- Staff receive good supervision, support and training that enable them to work effectively with a wide range of students.
- Most students develop a good understanding of their local community and the wider world through some very effective promotion and reinforcement of equality and diversity.

This is not yet an outstanding provider because:

- The observations of teaching, learning and assessment do not highlight the progress made, or skills developed, by students, nor are they used to identify and share successful and innovative practice.
- The range and quality of the learning resources used at the Farleigh College and Swindon college base are insufficient to give students access to the widest possible learning experience.
- The data on learner progress and achievement are not used for evaluating the effectiveness, or influencing the development, of the curriculum.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- As a matter of urgency, introduce a comprehensive, accessible method of recording student progress, achievement and destinations, including personal, social and employability development.
- Broaden the range and quality of learning resources, including some accommodation, in order to enrich learning and provide greater opportunities for students to develop their skills.
- Make sure quality improvement and development plans are clearly focused on improving the learner experience, have measureable outcomes that enable staff and managers to review and assess the impact of their actions with confidence.
- Improve the effectiveness of observations of teaching, learning and assessment by having a greater focus on the skills acquired and progress made by students. Identify and share the good and effective practice that naturally occurs in lessons and other learning situations.
- Use data more effectively, including trend analysis and benchmarking, to inform the self-assessment process.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Good
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- The very good progress that students make in developing their personal and social skills enables students to also achieve well in a wide range and level of qualifications. This is reflected in the year-on-year improvement in student destinations, with the large majority progressing into higher, further education or employment, including five students moving on to university. After a slight decrease in achievement levels in the previous year, the college has shown a substantial improvement in students reaching their primary goals.
- Students make significant progress in managing their own complex conditions to enable them to make a successful transition from the college to the varied destinations appropriate for their future needs. The highly effective therapeutic and personal support from the college staff ensures students develop their English, mathematics and communication skills to a good level in preparation for moving on to their next stage.
- The college routinely collects and collates the performance of all students and there are no significant achievement gaps between different groups of students. Where a slight difference has been identified with very low numbers involved, the college has recognised a potential area for development.
- Students enjoy their lessons at all sites and attendance is good. Students benefit from good travel training that helps them to access the most appropriate courses and work experience placements in preparation for life beyond the college.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
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- Teaching, learning and assessment are good and lead to good outcomes for students. Staff and managers have a deep commitment to students and are ambitious for them. Staff encourage students to have high expectations of themselves and support them well to develop the skills needed to live a fulfilling life as independently as possible.
- Specialist therapeutic support and development are excellent. Speech and language therapists, creative art and movement therapists, psychologists and counsellors work closely with staff and any parents in need of support to help them understand and work effectively with the wide

variety of autistic spectrum and other conditions that students bring to the college. Students value the college’s specialist programmes for communication skills, eye contact and appropriate body language that support social skills. A weekly group for young women provides a safe environment to discuss gender and other issues.

- Students receive high levels of attention and support and have individualised and flexible programmes that allow them to learn in the most effective way, whether individually, in small groups, or in larger classes at one of several partner further education colleges. Staff know the students well and use well-informed and innovative strategies to help them manage their own behaviour and allow them to learn. Educational and behavioural support is flexible, non-intrusive and reduced in line with students’ developing confidence and skills.
- The college makes good use of specialist local organisations, such as one aimed at young men, to help male students address any inappropriate approaches to young women. The quality of teaching and learning by partner further education college staff is good, as is the teaching of independence and practical skills on Farleigh sites. Students living in college houses learn to travel independently, to plan, budget and shop for supplies, to prepare food, do their laundry, care for their accommodation and plan leisure activities.
- The college focuses strongly on English and mathematics, which form a part of all students’ programmes, both in separate sessions and integrated into practical skills lessons or the progression qualification. Staff are skilled at developing communication skills by getting, for example, mathematics students to explain their calculating methods aloud or creating a climate of interest in which students, without prompting, ask questions about another student’s mixed ethnicity family or speculate about the problems new immigrants to the United Kingdom face on arrival. However, no member of staff currently has the required level of specialist teaching qualification to support staff with integrating mathematics into their work.
- Advice and guidance are good. Students and their parents or carers receive helpful information before starting college and can visit as often as they need to until they feel confident about their choice. Joint work with youth engagement colleagues is very effective in negotiating the entry arrangements for students transferring to Farleigh from unsuccessful former placements. Arrangements for moving on from college are particularly good and include exploring realistic paid, supported or voluntary work opportunities, further education possibilities and accommodation options. Staff support students well with further education college or university applications.
- Verbal feedback on students’ contributions and progress is frequent, encouraging and celebrative. Written feedback is detailed and constructive.

The effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
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- Leaders and managers reinforce high expectations for the achievement, behaviour and progression of all students. Enthusiastic and motivated staff have a high level of professional commitment to helping students become successful. Their roles and responsibilities are clearly linked to ensuring students are successful during their time at the college. Sensitive handling of the recent staffing restructure resulted in a strengthening of the college’s ability to deliver good quality provision.
- The Priory Group quality improvement and compliance team provides a strong challenge to leaders and managers. Previous visits have identified areas for improvement and the college has responded well to actions relating to improving the learner experience. However, progress relating to improving the self-assessment process and the development of a database to monitor and record learner information is slow.
- Performance management and supervision of staff arrangements are good. Staff face many challenges during their time at work. They work with vulnerable students who have complex and fluctuating barriers to learning, some are a danger to themselves or others. Regular and

frequent one-to-one meetings between line managers and their teams reinforce and acknowledge good performance. Where areas for development or poor performance are identified, appropriate support and training are provided.

- Too many learning resources in the Swindon College base room and the Farleigh College site are outdated, and some accommodation requires attention in order to be fully effective as a learning environment.
- Although much teaching, learning and assessment are good, the current quality assurance of teaching and learning requires further development. In too many observations, the focus on the progress made by students in sessions or the skills they develop is insufficient and often does not reflect the significant achievements made by students. The formal observations do not consistently record the good and effective practice that takes place across the college.
- The current self-assessment report fails to capture some of the good work taking place. Too many statements describe activity or actions that are standard expectations when working with students with complex needs. Although the college collects a large amount of data, the use of data is under developed, with too little analysis of some key areas of the college's work.
- Learner involvement in influencing the work of the college is improving and is now good. All residences have an effective representative and students have more confidence in the student council. Creative ways to encourage students with communication difficulties to become involved are being considered, but not implemented at the time of the inspection. The student council is reviewing key policies on bullying and sanctions, as well as contributing to decision making in other areas such as the range of activities available and the installation of Wi-Fi in the residences.
- The college effectively obtains parents' views through formal and informal methods. College staff keep in regular contact with parents, informing them of any concerns or developments. Students are overwhelmingly positive about their experience at Farleigh College. A questionnaire created by a learner produced valuable insights into the how students feel about their time at college.
- The college is effective and in some areas highly effective in promoting and reinforcing equality and diversity. Students develop a good understanding of their rights, responsibilities and the impact their behaviour can have on other people. Staff use everyday situations and learner experiences to illustrate the need to have a good awareness of equality and diversity. The county disability hate-crime champion works well with groups of students to reduce their likelihood of becoming a victim of crime.
- Safeguarding measures meet statutory requirements. Well planned, suitable training gives staff the confidence to know when to report incidents and how to manage situations. Students have a high level of trust and confidence in staff. Records of incidents are good, comprehensive and clearly show the time line of incident reporting and actions. Follow up actions are appropriate and managed well. The risk assessment and personal handling plan (PHP) arrangements are very strong. Where appropriate, students are involved in their own risk assessments. E-safety requires further development; it does not currently feature in the safeguarding policy, although all students sign an appropriate internet use form. Staff respond quickly and appropriately, when an e-safety issue arises; however, many students would benefit from more systematic and regular input.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

Farleigh Further Education 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	-	-	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	56							
Principal/CEO	Mr Martin Bentham							
Date of previous inspection	January 2010							
Website address	http://www.priorygroup.com/location-results/item/farleigh-further-education-college---swindon							
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+
	17	9	6	2	7	4	-	-
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	-	-	-	-	-	-		
Number of traineeships	16-19		19+		Total			
	-		-		-			
Number of learners aged 14-16								
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"> ■ Swindon College ■ New College Swindon ■ SEQOL 							

Contextual information

Farleigh Further Education College – Swindon was established in 2004 as part of the Priory Group. The college specialises in working with students with Asperger’s Syndrome and those without a formal diagnosis but with significant social and communication difficulties. Some students also have additional mental health difficulties. The college enrolls students from a wide geographical area and has a mix of residential and day students. The vast majority of learners are White British and over 80% are male.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector

Nigel Evans HMI

One of Her Majesty’s Inspectors (HMI) and two additional inspectors, assisted by the head of 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; these views are reflected throughout the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all relevant provision at the provider. Inspectors looked at the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across all of the provision and graded the sector subject areas listed in the report above.

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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