

# Ruskin Mill College

## Follow up re-inspection monitoring visit report

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**Unique reference number:** 133036

**Name of lead inspector:** Nigel Evans HMI

**Last day of inspection:** 24 June 2014

**Type of provider:** Independent specialist college

**Address:** The Fisheries  
Stroud  
Horsley  
GL6 0PL

**Telephone number:** 01453 837500

## Monitoring Visit: Main Findings

### Context and focus of visit

This is the second follow-up re-inspection monitoring visit to Ruskin Mill College following publication of the inspection report on 25 April 2014. This found the provider to have inadequate effectiveness of leadership and management, good quality of teaching, learning and assessment and good outcomes for learners. The overall effectiveness of the college was found to be inadequate.

Ruskin Mill College is part of Ruskin Mill Trust Limited. The college is situated on a large site in Gloucestershire and provides a curriculum based on craft activities such as willow-, iron- and leather-work, and land-based activities that include organic horticulture, care of livestock and fish farming. The college provides for students with a range of learning disabilities, emotional needs and challenging behaviours.

### Themes

<b>What progress has been made in clarifying the accountability, reporting arrangements and communication links between residential and educational provision?</b>	<b>Reasonable improvement for learners</b>
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The strong and sustained focus on clarifying accountability and improving links between residential and educational provision is now beginning to have an impact on the experience of students. Meetings and reporting structures have a greater emphasis on the needs of students. Discussions on individual students are more frequent with increased involvement and contributions from residential staff. Middle managers have increasing authority and responsibility to control and influence the areas for which they are accountable. At the last inspection, managers were not fully effective in monitoring all aspects of provision and maintaining standards. Reports to the senior management team (SMT) now provide the appropriate level of detail and information to enable senior managers to monitor provision and prioritise improvements. Use of current and comparative data is more effective in supporting the quality assurance and quality improvement function of the SMT.

The use of the one-page profile for students provides a valuable means of ensuring that education and residential staff have a greater understanding of the needs and interests of students. At the time of the monitoring visit, not all students had a completed one-page profile. However, the college is confident that all students will have a completed profile by the beginning of the autumn term. It is too soon to judge the full impact of the introduction of the profiles. However, the intention is that students will have greater influence over their learning with support and guidance from student journey managers (SJMs).

The assessment and recording framework is under regular review. Education and residential staff have been involved in refining the framework to ensure it is appropriate, not overly bureaucratic and easy to implement. The use of the visual representation for measuring progress is an effective way of identifying progress. It has the potential to involve students in target setting and reviewing their own progress more successfully. It will also provide valuable data to help managers identify achievement gaps between groups of students.

The progress made in improving the structure of the plans is reasonable. The college recognises that further improvements are required to develop specific and measurable individual targets. Some of the functional skills targets or comments lacked clarity, particularly when tutors were unclear about which functional skills are relevant to the activity planned. In too many examples, comments by tutors on how an individual can improve were not task or skill-specific. They did not become targets or goals in subsequent sessions. As a result, it was not possible to identify any improvements made because of tutor feedback.

**What progress has been made in developing strategies to reduce the number of incidents that compromise the safety of students and staff? Reasonable improvement for learners**

The new student safety and well-being group has significantly improved the communication about safeguarding or other student concerns. Representation from education and residential staff is good. The active approach to managing low-level incidents or minor concerns is already reducing the number of major safeguarding incidents. Reported incidents and occurrences are examined in detail to identify learning points and to reduce the level, seriousness and number in the future.

Those staff who have undertaken appropriate training report that their ability to diffuse difficult situations has improved significantly. Previously, many staff avoided confrontations or mismanaged situations. They are now able to anticipate when a student may be feeling frustrated, angry or likely to act inappropriately and to put suitable measures in place.

The reorganisation of the curriculum and support provided for students has also reduced safeguarding incidents. Individual timetables are simpler and more easily understood by students. The amount and frequency of travel between areas of the college has reduced because of the division of the college site into three areas. Each area has a support and attendance coordinator to reinforce acceptable behaviour and respond quickly to concerns regarding safety and behaviour. Where possible, staff now travel to the student to provide specific support or therapy. Staff who have received training in using the behaviour-reporting system are using it effectively. Students feel positive about the system. The improved communication between education and residential staff means they are able to discuss any reported incidents quickly and with confidence that information shared is accurate. Students welcome

the increased presence of managers around the college, particularly in the social areas.

Students report that it is now much easier to approach the safeguarding manager informally about minor concerns whereas previously they would have to request a specific appointment. Students are also aware that residential staff communicate more frequently with education staff. This ensures that they are punctual for sessions, have what is required for the day and to share any relevant information.

The college is introducing more flexible working arrangements for staff. For example, a residential worker will work until mid-morning to ensure a smooth transition into college for a student and the education worker will work in the student's home in the early evening.

Improvements to e-safety are reasonable. Developing this area is a clear priority for the college and training for all relevant staff is scheduled. At present, the main focus is on posters, prompts on computer screen savers and through discussions with staff. However, further practical reinforcement is required if students are going to have sufficient confidence, awareness and understanding to keep themselves safe at college, work or home.

The stronger, practical emphasis on equality and diversity is having a positive effect on student behaviour and on the culture of tolerance and mutual respect around the college. Staff have an increased willingness to challenge unacceptable language or behaviour. If required, the member of staff responsible for equality and diversity will undertake intensive work with individuals or small groups. This improves students' understanding of their equality and diversity rights and responsibilities and why these are important in college and beyond.

**What progress has been made in evaluating the quality of all aspects of safeguarding and health and safety?**

**Reasonable improvement for learners**

Key staff continue to analyse historical health and safety and safeguarding issues. Where necessary they reclassify incidents or concerns, taking further action if necessary. For example, the replacement by gates of several stiles on the college site followed a more detailed scrutiny of reports.

The evaluation of the risk assessment process resulted in piloting an improved system that is intended to increase the value and effectiveness of risk assessments. The new risk assessments now include an education and a residential element where appropriate. There is greater input from staff and, in some cases, from students. The risk assessment process is now integrated with the management information system allowing staff to link assessments to individual students, settings and activities more easily.

The continuing evaluation and quality assurance of the use of the emergency duty manager system shows that some, but not all, duty managers now communicate and share information more frequently. This provides more detail following concerns raised or incidents reported.

The current action plan is an improvement on the previous version. It has a greater emphasis on student needs and the intended impact of actions on their experience at college. However, the use of data to clarify the current position and set measurable improvement targets is not effective.

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