



National Centre for Young People with Epilepsy (NCYPE)



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

Inspection report

Audience	Published	Provider reference
Post-sixteen	April 2007	125453

Contents

Basic information about the college	3
Background of the organisation	4
Scope of the inspection	4

Summary of grades awarded	5
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Overall judgement	6
Main findings	8

Basic information about the college

Name of college: National Centre for Young People with Epilepsy (NCYPE)

Type of college: Independent, specialist, residential

Principal: Amanda Quincey

Address of college: St Piers Lane, Lingfield, Surrey RH7 6PW

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Chair of governors: Ann Wilks CBE

Unique reference number: 125453

Name of lead inspector: Sue Harrison, HMI

Dates of inspection: 27 February – 1 March 2007

Background of the organisation

1. The Further Education College of the National Centre for Young People with Epilepsy (NCYPE) is an independent specialist college for learners with epilepsy or other neurological conditions. Many learners have additional needs such as dyslexia, autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) and other medical and physical conditions. The college is on the NCYPE campus at Lingfield, Surrey. All the NCYPE operations are based there. They comprise, in addition to the college, a medical centre, an administrative centre, residential homes for children and young adults and a school. The work of the school and college take place in separate buildings. There is a separate management structure for the college and school, with the Director of Health and Social Care taking responsibility for the FE college care provision. The college is governed by the Trust Board for the NCYPE.
2. The college has 53 learners funded by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). The majority are aged 19-25 and are residential. Six learners are aged 16-18. Of the 53 learners, 25 are female, 28 are male. Nine learners are from minority ethnic backgrounds, representing a higher proportion than the local community and reflecting the college's wider recruitment area. Learners are recruited predominantly from the south east and London.
3. The college mission is to provide 'Better futures for young lives with epilepsy.' The curriculum offers a range of pathways; special educational needs programmes, life skills, and vocational and work-based learning. An increasing number of learners attend link courses at the local further education college. 41% of learners follow ASDAN Towards Independence, 47% follow skills for working life and 12% follow a sensory/fundamental skills programme. All learners receive life skills as part of the curriculum.

Scope of the inspection

4. In deciding the scope of this inspection, inspectors took account of: the college's previous inspection report (www.ofsted.gov.uk); the college's most recent self-assessment report and development plans; comments from the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC); reports from the inspectorate annual assessment visits; and data on enrolments and learners' achievements over the period since the last inspection. This inspection focused on the following aspects:
 - overall effectiveness of the college and its capacity to improve further
 - achievements and standards
 - quality of provision
 - leadership and management.

Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision	Satisfactory: grade 3
Capacity to improve	Satisfactory: grade 3
Achievements and standards	Satisfactory: grade 3
Quality of provision	Satisfactory: grade 3
Leadership and management	Satisfactory: grade 3

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Satisfactory: grade 3

5. This is an improving college. Inspectors agree with the college's self-assessment that its overall effectiveness is satisfactory. Learners' achievement is satisfactory. They acquire good standards in some areas of work and they develop good work-related skills. However, progress to employment when learners leave college is low and has not improved since the last inspection. Opportunities for learners to acquire daily living skills have improved substantially.
6. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Most lessons are well planned and learners enjoy the activities. However, initial assessment does not sufficiently capture what learners can already do when they start at college. Some targets in individual learning plans (ILPs) are too general and, while staff have a good understanding of learners' progress, this is not always well recorded. The college's approach to social and educational inclusion is good. Curriculum development has led to programmes which are generally very successful at meeting learners' needs and interests. The additional activities programme is very popular with learners. Guidance and support are good and some aspects are outstanding. The communication between teaching, care and therapy staff is good. This multi-disciplinary approach makes an excellent contribution to the physical and emotional wellbeing of the learners and to the promotion of their independence.
7. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The college leadership team provides clear direction for the staff, who are well motivated to further improve the quality of the learner experience. Quality assurance arrangements have improved since the last inspection and a self-critical culture is developing. However, the college does not analyse sufficiently the progress made by different groups of learners. Staff development is increasingly well focused to meet identified priorities, but the college recognises the need for more teaching and learning support staff to gain specialist qualifications. The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory and good arrangements are in place for the safety of learners. Financial management and value for money are both satisfactory.

Capacity to improve

Satisfactory: grade 3

8. The college has satisfactory capacity to make further improvements. It has made reasonable progress in all the main areas that were identified as weaknesses at the last inspection. Quality assurance is satisfactory. The college leadership team has a good understanding of the strengths and areas for improvements. Inspectors agreed with most of the college judgements in its self-assessment report. Staff discuss the effectiveness of their own team but

they are not sufficiently involved in the self-assessment process for the whole college. The Further Education Governing Body (FEGB), which was established in 2006, has improved the capacity of the NCYPE to monitor the work of the college.

The effectiveness of the steps taken by the college to promote improvement since the last inspection

9. The improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. Leadership and management and the teaching of literacy and numeracy have improved and are now satisfactory. Effective action has been taken to improve the safety of the site and to ensure residential accommodation is more appropriate for young adults. Progress has been made in strategic planning and quality assurance arrangements, although this has not yet had sufficient impact across all aspects of the college work.

Key strengths of the college

Strengths

- strong leadership
- good standard of work in art, information and communication technology (ICT) and land-based provision
- highly effective multi-disciplinary approach to promote independence and to support learners
- good range of provision to meet learners' needs
- well developed and popular enrichment programme.

Areas for improvement

The college should address:

- inadequate recording of outcomes of initial assessment to inform target setting
- lack of progression to employment for more able learners
- insufficient recording of learners' progress and analysis of learners' achievement
- staff not sufficiently involved in self-assessment process
- lack of specialist qualifications for teachers and classroom support workers.

Main findings

Achievements and standards

Satisfactory: grade 3

10. Inspectors agree with the college's self-assessment that learners' achievement is satisfactory. In 2005/06, learners achieved 69% of their targets. The college does not fully record the progress each learner is making. However, data indicate that most learners achieve their overall primary learning goal. An increasing proportion of learners completes ASDAN Towards Independence modules; 15 achieved the award in 2005 and 38 in 2006.
11. Learners grow in confidence and develop good work-related skills whilst on work placement. However, progression to employment when learners leave college remains low. This was an area for development at the last inspection. Last year, none of the 16 leavers went into employment. The college has recently started to address this issue but the work is at an early stage of development. Links with Connexions and social services in the learners' home areas are underdeveloped.
12. Learners effectively develop daily living skills in realistic environments. The links between the college and the hostels have improved significantly since the last inspection. For example, learners make good progress in planning their own menus for the week and shopping for the required food. Their progress in carrying out these tasks is fully monitored and forms part of their learning plans. They adopt safe practices and an increasingly healthy lifestyle. Behaviour and attendance are good. Learners make a lively contribution to the life of the college and the wider community. One notable achievement is the outreach work, whereby learners visit other organisations, such as the local school, to raise awareness about epilepsy.
13. The standard of learners' work in ICT and land based programmes is good. The standard of learners' work in creative arts is very good. They develop good skills of critical analysis and are able to use technical language accurately. They are encouraged to explore different artists' work and different media in order to help them identify a style they like and then produce their own work. Learners in ICT develop good research skills and produce very good work whilst accessing the World Wide Web. Learners working on the farm develop confidence in handling and caring for the animals.
14. The systems to celebrate learners' achievements are improving. Within the newly introduced merit system, most learners achieve well. Staff award extra merits for outstanding achievement and some learners have achieved significant numbers of merits for their work. Learners on work experience gain a certificate of achievement, as does the learner of the week.

Quality of provision

Satisfactory: grade 3

15. The quality of provision is satisfactory, with some good features. Inspectors agree with the college's own judgement that teaching and learning are satisfactory. Lessons are generally well planned. Teachers devise a good variety of lively activities for classroom lessons. Vocational staff develop learners' practical skills in real life contexts. Learners enjoy their lessons and contribute freely. Teachers make good use of a wide range of visual images in well designed learning materials. Some use digital photographs of practical sessions effectively to reinforce learning at the end of lessons. The focus on the development of communication skills using speech, signing or symbols is increasing, although the college acknowledges this is not yet sufficiently developed. A few learners who would benefit from voice-operated communication aids do not have sufficient access to them.
16. Not all lessons differentiate sufficiently between the abilities of individual learners in the activities planned or materials used. Some teachers and support workers use forms of praise inappropriate to young adults. Staff are appropriately qualified although few teachers have specialist qualifications in working with learners with learning difficulties and disabilities. Literacy and numeracy teaching was a weakness at the last inspection but is now satisfactorily embedded in all lessons, although only one teacher has a specialist literacy qualification at level 4.
17. Initial and baseline assessments are satisfactory. Teachers conduct assessments over whatever timescale is appropriate for each learner. However, they do not record learners' existing skills in vocational or creative pathways clearly enough. The college does not have a sufficiently secure starting point for each learner from which to measure progress over time. Teachers are fully aware of the progress that each learner is making but do not always record this in sufficient detail. Targets in ILPs are often too broad, although detailed lists of steps to achieve targets are well designed. Many targets use language which is inaccessible to learners.
18. Staff provide well for learners' additional learning needs. Classes generally have a good ratio of learning support workers. However, arrangements to cover for staff absence are not always satisfactory. Most learning support staff have a good understanding of individual learners' needs and provide discrete and helpful support, although few have specialist qualifications.
19. The extent to which programmes meet the needs and interests of learners has improved and is good. The college judged this outstanding in its self-assessment report. The college's approach to social and educational inclusion is good. It caters for a wide range of learner needs and ensures that all learners can benefit from the range of social and educational opportunities it offers.
20. The curriculum pathways provide a clear progressive structure of communication support, life skills development, vocational options and work

experience. They use the college environment well to support practical skills development in business administration and ICT, creative arts, horticulture and design technology. Qualifications are offered from pre-entry to level 1 across the curriculum. College certificates and the merit system are used to motivate and support non-accredited achievement.

21. The life skills programme provides good opportunities to develop independence, healthy living and communication skills. Fridays are wholly given over to enhancement activities which are popular with learners. In the evenings and at weekends, learners receive encouragement to use local facilities and they have participated in horse riding at a competitive level, dance clubs, and local sports facilities.
22. The college has responded well to an increase in learners with significant sensory impairments and those on the autistic spectrum by developing a specialist curriculum, though this has been limited by accommodation restrictions and the need for more staff with specialist qualifications.
23. A small number of learners attend a local further education college for health and social care courses. Further links are being developed to increase opportunities for the minority of learners with the potential to achieve higher level qualifications across a range of vocational areas. Work experience opportunities are good and the college works closely with the local Connexions Personal Advisor, who contributes to workplace assessment.
24. Guidance and support for learners are good and inspectors agree with the college that some aspects are outstanding. The communication between teaching, care and therapy staff is good. The college provides outstanding expertise to ensure the physical and emotional wellbeing of learners. The strategy to provide extensive support for all, rather than concentrating on the few with the greatest need, supports the growth of self-confidence and independence across the college, particularly in relation to physiotherapy. Initial assessment for personal support is thorough and detailed leading to comprehensive and appropriate individual plans and clear targets for this aspect of a learner's programme. There are close links between key workers and personal tutors. Records indicate constant communication and reinforcement of targets and strategies to support behaviour and independence.
25. Behaviour management is a particular strength. Information is provided to all staff through the 'factors affecting learning' sheets outlining strategies and specific needs. Training to support those teaching learners with sensory impairments or autism is beginning to help staff address more effectively the specific needs of these groups. The college promotes health and safety well; it plans risk assessment exceptionally well to meet the specific needs of the college population.

26. Tutorial support is satisfactory. Personal tutors know their group well as they also teach them a curriculum subject. The system is new with some variations in the standard of recording and appropriate identification and evaluation of required actions. Managers monitor attendance and punctuality closely. Careers advice is satisfactory. The transition curriculum is improving. Staff make contact with relevant agencies in learners' home areas, though this is usually more successful in relation to accommodation than in arranging further training or employment.

Leadership and management

Satisfactory: grade 3

27. Inspectors agree with the college's judgement that leadership and management are satisfactory. The college leadership team provides clear direction. Staff understand their roles and responsibilities and their priorities. Communication is good. Strategic planning has improved since the last inspection and is satisfactory. The links between the strategic plan for the NCYPE and the further education college are clearer.
28. Quality assurance arrangements are satisfactory. The system for monitoring teaching and learning is more robust than in previous years and managers use outcomes well to inform appraisal and staff development. A self-critical culture is developing in the organisation. It is too early to see the impact of this across all aspects of the provision, but there have been improvements in curriculum planning and the teaching of literacy and numeracy. Staff contribute to self-assessment within their own teams, but have insufficient opportunities to look at strengths and areas for development across the college. Plans are in place for this to take place in 2007.
29. The promotion of equality of opportunity is satisfactory. The college has satisfactorily addressed the requirements of equality and diversity legislation. It has the required policies and action plans for ensuring racial equality and preventing disability discrimination. However, it does not yet analyse the achievement of different groups of learners sufficiently.
30. Managers deploy resources well. Staff are generally well qualified and experienced for their roles. The college self-assessment report identifies the need for more teaching and learning support staff to acquire specialist qualifications. Child protection procedures are thorough and all staff have undertaken recent training. Both staff and learners undertake appropriate health and safety training. Good procedures are in place for risk assessment and the reporting of accidents. Resources to support learning are satisfactory overall and good in some areas. Managers have addressed weaknesses in learners' accommodation identified at the last inspection. Some accommodation has been closed, improvements have been made to the existing houses and new accommodation is being built. The college has developed its work with external partners since the last inspection and this is having a positive impact on the curriculum offer for learners.

31. Governance is satisfactory. The trustees' focus on the work of the college has improved since the last inspection. The FEGB, established in 2006, reports to the NCYPE Trust board. The FEGB has clear terms of reference, which include responsibility for monitoring the work of the college. Monitoring is satisfactory. Governors have a clear understanding of the main areas for development and they are building up their knowledge of the work of the college to help them track progress better than previously. Governors have recognised the need to strengthen the educational expertise of the governing body and have taken appropriate action to address this.
32. Financial management and value for money are satisfactory.