

National Centre for Young People with Epilepsy

Inspection report

Unique reference number: 125453

Name of lead inspector: Joyce Deere HMI

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Type of provider: Independent specialist college

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Information about the provider

1. The National Centre for Young People with Epilepsy (NCYPE) Further Education College is a residential/day establishment for students aged 16 to 25 with epilepsy and/or other neurological conditions. The college is situated near Lingfield in Surrey and students are funded by the Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA). In 2009/10 109 students attended the college of which 90 were White and 71 were male. All except one were over 19. The college has doubled its student numbers since the last inspection, and changed the cohort. Only around 50% of students have epilepsy. Most students follow programmes at foundation level. The college has recently started provision for students with autistic spectrum disorders, and 10 students with profound and multiple learning difficulties follow a sensory curriculum. Four students attend a full-time course in a local further education college. The principal started in post at the start of the academic year and manages the school and the college. At the previous inspection the college was judged to be satisfactory overall.

Type of provision	Number of enrolled learners in 2010/11
Provision for 16-18 learners	1 full time
Provision for 19+ learners	109 full-time

Summary report

Grades: 1 is outstanding; 2 is good; 3 is satisfactory; 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness of provision		Grade 3
Capacity to improve		Grade 3
		Grade
Outcomes for learners		3
Quality of provision		3
Leadership and management		3
Safeguarding		2
Equality and diversity		3

Overall effectiveness

- The college's overall effectiveness is satisfactory. Achievements are satisfactory, and most students meet their primary learning goals. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The curriculum meets the needs and interests of most students well, but is less effective for students on the sensory programme and those with autism. The specialist therapeutic support for epilepsy continues to be a strength of the college. The college is satisfactorily led by the newly-appointed principal, governors and senior managers. Safeguarding is good, with rigorous procedures. Equality and diversity are satisfactory.

Main Findings

- Students' achievement of their primary learning targets is satisfactory. The numbers of students who meet or exceed their long-term destination goals has increased. Students make good progress in developing skills of independence and social skills. They feel safe, are encouraged to lead healthy lifestyles and have good opportunities to engage with the local community. The college is not yet able to evaluate success rates and the distance travelled by students during their time at the college.
- Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. In the best sessions, teachers use well-prepared practical activities to develop students' skills and communication abilities. They use technology to develop students' understanding and to promote equality and diversity. Behaviour management is generally very effective. Students have a wide variety of opportunities to exercise choice.

- In less successful sessions, students' individual targets are not sufficiently defined, and tasks are not sufficiently matched to individual needs. Staff do not always allow students time to reflect. Some provide too much help, whilst others give constant verbal directions. In some lessons, staff use too few opportunities to develop communication skills.
- Staff do not all have the specialist knowledge essential to the needs of students with whom they are working. In particular, some staff lack strategies for working effectively with students with autistic spectrum disorders and those with profound and complex needs. The lack of a dedicated team of support staff in the sensory programmes adversely affects the quality of learning.
- The development of literacy and numeracy skills is integrated into the curriculum and the college is working on plans to offer discrete functional skills accreditation. However, no staff currently have specialist teaching qualifications in numeracy at the required level and too few teachers and support staff have the specialist knowledge of strategies to develop students' reading and writing skills.
- Teaching facilities are good in some areas. Students have good access to the farm, the workshops, the art room, the sports hall and the gym. Well-designed kitchens in residences provide good environments for learning daily living skills.
- The curriculum meets the needs of the students on the higher level courses well. The curriculum has been revised to meet external requirements and allows for clear progression routes and flexible timetabling, including work-related activity and experience in a mainstream college. The enrichment programme is good. However, the provision for the smaller number of students on the sensory programme and those with autism is less effective in meeting their needs.
- Partnerships are very effective in enabling students to undertake work experience which is related to their interests. Partnerships with a range of other statutory and voluntary bodies enable students to promote disability awareness at local and national level.
- Care, guidance and support are good. Therapeutic support for students with epilepsy is exceptionally good. The college benefits from the expertise of the national research and development centre for epilepsy on the site and students with epilepsy are very well supported. The pre-entry assessment clearly identifies students' learning, health and therapeutic support needs. However, the expertise of therapists is not effectively used to develop teaching and learning strategies for students with autism.
- The new principal, governors and senior managers provide satisfactory leadership and management. They have worked well together to review the provision and the strategic direction of the college. Members of staff are positive about communications with senior staff. While managers and governors set challenging targets they do not have the systems in place to collate outcomes in order to evaluate the quality of provision on an annual basis. The governing body does not include student representatives.

- Safeguarding has a very high profile in the college. Arrangements for implementing the procedures are particularly rigorous and are a strength of the college. The risk assessments are very effective in identifying the levels of risk and also providing clear guidance for staff.
- Equality and diversity are promoted satisfactorily. The equality and diversity champion supports tutors well to improve aspects of teaching. Equality and diversity are promoted well within the personal and social development curriculum, although less in evidence elsewhere. Students develop and participate well in events to celebrate diversity. The composition of the governing body and the staff does not reflect the ethnicity of the student cohort and no one has declared a disability.
- Self-assessment and arrangements to monitor the quality of provision are satisfactory. Arrangements for the observation of teaching have been revised but have not yet resulted in significant improvements. The views of staff, students and parents/carers are sufficiently captured, but the college is less successful in its arrangements to obtain the views of employers and its partner colleges.
- The college provides satisfactory value for money. Financial management is satisfactory and outcomes for students are improving. Staff follow an extensive programme of mandatory training and updating. However, the staffing arrangements for students identified with needing intensive support are not satisfactory, and have a detrimental effect on the teaching.

What does the college need to do to improve further?

- Develop further the arrangements for collation of management information, so that students' achievements from the start of their programmes can be effectively evaluated, and the college can monitor its performance more effectively on an annual basis.
- Rectify the weaknesses in teaching and learning by ensuring that observers have appropriate specialist knowledge, encourage the sharing of good practice and provide teaching and support staff with clear action plans for improvement.
- Develop the effectiveness of literacy and numeracy work by supporting teachers in obtaining the required national level of qualification in numeracy, and ensuring that all teachers, support staff and care staff receive training in literacy and numeracy teaching strategies.
- Develop the provision for students on the sensory programme and for those with autism by ensuring that all staff who work with the students are trained and make use of specialist strategies that facilitate communication.
- Continue to develop the promotion of equality and diversity in teaching to widen students' understanding. Continue to seek ways of improving the proportion of staff and governors from minority ethnic backgrounds and with disabilities, in order to reflect the composition of the student body.
- Implement formal arrangements to obtain the views of employers and partner colleges to contribute to the self-evaluation processes. Ensure that student

representatives are included in governors' meetings to enable them to inform the board directly of the views of students.

- Ensure that students with the most profound and complex needs have dedicated teams of support staff in lessons, so that they receive sufficient continuity of support to enable them to learn.

Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors

What students like:

- the opportunities to attend mainstream colleges
- working on the farm
- being on committees
- going on work experience
- making friends
- having the opportunity to learn new things
- leisure and sports facilities.

What students would like to see improved:

- the overcrowded common room at lunch times
- more time to learn
- need more help with maths
- longer break times
- sometimes staff don't listen
- more working phones
- greater certainty about their future.

What employers who provide work experience like:

- support for students is good
- can always contact the college if help is needed
- students make good progress.

Main inspection report

Capacity to make and sustain improvement

Grade 3

3. The college continues to have satisfactory capacity to improve. It has set demanding targets for the achievement of primary learning goals, and is in the process of developing more comprehensive measures to evaluate progress. The new principal and governors have reviewed the provision and identified clear priorities in relation to the experience of students. The self-assessment report is largely accurate in its grading. Progress has been made in most of the key areas for improvement identified at the last inspection, but the need for greater specialism in some areas of the curriculum is a continuing issue.

Outcomes for learners

Grade 3

4. Outcomes for students are satisfactory. The achievement of non-accredited targets improved in 2009/10, following a drop in 2008/09, and is now satisfactory, although it remains below the college's target. A few students achieve full accredited qualifications, and most students achieve a number of accredited units. The college has analysed its outcomes by race, gender and disability and no gaps in performance were found between the different groups of students.
5. Students enjoy their experience at the college and make good progress in developing skills of independence, particularly in the residences. They also improve their social skills. However, although the college has started a pilot to record each student's journey, it does not adequately capture the full extent of the progress made by students during their time at the college. The destinations of leavers are satisfactory, and the majority of students move to the destination predicted. Rates of attendance and retention are satisfactory.
6. All students now have some kind of internal work-related experience and around a quarter have short external placements. Students feel safe at the college and are aware of safety procedures. They have a good understanding of bullying and who to go to if they have a complaint. They are encouraged to make healthy choices at meal times, have opportunities for exercise and to discuss issues such as sexual health and drugs. The emphasis on community involvement is strong and students are encouraged to be ambassadors for the college, increasing their self-confidence in public settings.

The quality of provision

Grade 3

7. The quality of provision is satisfactory overall as are teaching and learning. In the best sessions, teachers use well-prepared practical activities to develop students' skills and communication abilities. They use technology well and images in videoed material promote equalities very effectively. Teachers handle discussion sensitively and model good practice in speaking in groups. Teaching and learning in the personal development modules are very effective. Behaviour

management is generally good and students have good opportunities to exercise choice.

8. In less successful sessions, students' individual targets are not sufficiently defined, and tasks are not sufficiently matched to their needs. Some staff provide too much physical help, whilst others give constant directions and do not allow sufficient time for reflection. In some lessons for students with complex or profound needs, the staff use too few opportunities to develop communication skills, and the support staff do not know the students well enough to communicate with them effectively. The lack of a dedicated team of support staff in the sensory programmes adversely affects the quality of learning.
9. Literacy and numeracy provision are integrated into the curriculum and the college is working on plans to offer discrete functional skills accreditation. However, no staff currently have specialist teaching qualifications in numeracy at the required level and too few teachers and support staff have the specialist knowledge of strategies to develop students' reading and writing skills.
10. Teaching facilities are good in some areas. Students have good access to the farm, the workshops, the art room, the sports hall and the gym. Well-designed kitchens in residences provide good environments for learning daily living skills.
11. The curriculum meets the needs and interests of many students on higher level programmes well. The new programmes of learning allow for progression over three years, with a range of units which can be selected according to students' needs and interests. As appropriate, students can attend a local mainstream college and have external work experience. The enrichment programme is extensive. However, the provision is less effective for the students on the sensory course and those with autism.
12. Partnership working is very effective and has resulted in increasing opportunities for external work placements. Students gain confidence through their involvement in a community programme which involves talking to local and national community groups about disability and raising awareness of discrimination and stigma. The college works collaboratively with local colleges to increase educational options for students.
13. Care, support and guidance are good. The college benefits from the expertise of the national research centre for Epilepsy on the site, and students with epilepsy are exceptionally well supported. The pre-entry assessment clearly identifies the interventions that students require and their progress is monitored. Specialist support for students with visual impairment is being development. However, the expertise of therapists is not used effectively to support all of the staff who work with students with autism. Transition arrangements for students leaving the college are satisfactory.

Leadership and management

Grade 3

14. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The newly-appointed principal has worked well with the governing body to review the provision and the strategic direction of the college. Managers have identified and set challenging key targets for the college. However, they do not have systems in place to evaluate the quality of the provision on an annual basis. Governors provide a satisfactory level of challenge to senior managers and are increasing their involvement in the day-to-day activities of the college. However, although students are invited to make presentations to the board on occasions, there are no student representatives on the governing body. Communications between staff and managers are effective.
15. Safeguarding has a high priority and is good. The college meets the requirements for the vetting of staff and maintaining its central register. Staff training is well planned. It is included as part of induction and includes annual updates for all staff and governors. The mandatory training includes the Mental Capacity Act 2005, which staff apply in their work with students. The college works well with the local safeguarding board and keeps local authorities informed of any incidents, which are rigorously monitored and reported to governors several times a year. Risk assessments have improved and the new format is particularly effective in providing guidance for staff when a risk has been identified. E-safety arrangements are in place.
16. The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory and an equality and diversity champion works diligently to support teachers to include equality and diversity issues within lessons. However, this is not yet evident in all sessions and is not recorded in the teaching and learning observations. An active equality and diversity committee meets regularly and includes two students, elected by the student body. Students participate very well in the wide range of activities to celebrate diversity. Governors, staff and students have had recent equality and diversity training to update them about the Equality Act 2010. The proportion of staff and governors from minority ethnic backgrounds is disappointingly low in comparison with the student body, and no staff have declared disabilities.
17. Self-assessment and quality assurance procedures are satisfactory. Judgements in the self-assessment report are largely accurate, but failed to give sufficient weighting to a few areas for improvement found during the inspection. The college has satisfactory quality improvement processes and an annual quality audit plan. Procedures for obtaining the views of students are satisfactory. The college is successful in encouraging students to be involved in college life, including the student council. Students appreciate the opportunities to express their views and feel listened to and valued. The college regularly obtains views from staff and parents in its self-assessment, but does not obtain the views of employers and local partner colleges. Arrangements for observing teaching and learning have improved, and the college has accurately identified that teaching and learning have not yet improved sufficiently overall. The college recognises

the need for more specialist teaching observations on the sensory courses and those for students with autism.

18. Financial management and controls are satisfactory. Teaching accommodation is satisfactory, with good facilities in some areas, and the college is continuing to work towards the refurbishment of students' residential accommodation. Therapists are well qualified and teaching staff all have teaching qualifications, although no one has the required numeracy qualifications. The overall training programme for staff is extensive, with mandatory training, and expectations are that all staff will acquire appropriate qualifications. However, the training and deployment of staff who work to support the students with complex or profound learning needs are not satisfactory. Outcomes for students are satisfactory and the college provides satisfactory value for money.

Information about the inspection

19. Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and two additional inspectors, assisted by the vice principal, as nominee, carried out the inspection. Inspectors also took account of the college's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, the previous inspection report, reports from the inspectorate's quality monitoring inspection, and data on learners and their achievement over the period since the previous inspection.
20. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and emails. They looked at questionnaires that learners and parents had recently completed on behalf of the college. They also observed learning sessions, carried out case studies of individual students and spoke to parents. Inspectors collected evidence from programmes across the college and from the partner colleges.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

National Centre for Young People with Epilepsy

Learning types: 14–16: Young apprenticeships; Diplomas; **16–18 Learner responsive:** FE full- and part-time courses, Foundation learning tier, including Entry to Employment; **19+ responsive:** FE full- and part-time courses; **Employer responsive:** Train to Gain, apprenticeships

Grades using the 4 point scale 1: Outstanding; 2: Good; 3: Satisfactory; 4: Inadequate	Overall	16-18 Learner responsive	19+ Learner responsive
Approximate number of enrolled learners			
Full-time learners	110	1	109
Overall effectiveness	3	3	3
Capacity to improve	3		
Outcomes for learners	3	3	3
How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning?	3		
How well do learners attain their learning goals?	3		
How well do learners progress?	2		
How well do learners improve their economic and social well-being through learning and development?	3		
How safe do learners feel?	2		
<i>Are learners able to make informed choices about their own health and well being?*</i>	3		
<i>How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?*</i>	2		
Quality of provision	3	3	3
How effectively do teaching, training and assessment support learning and development?	3		
How effectively does the provision meet the needs and interests of users?	3		
How well partnerships with schools, employers, community groups and others lead to benefits for learners?	2		
How effective are the care, guidance and support learners receive in helping them to achieve?	2		
Leadership and management	3	3	3
How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation?	3		
<i>How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?*</i>	3		
How effectively does the provider promote the safeguarding of learners?	2		
How effectively does the provider actively promote equality and diversity, tackle discrimination and narrow the achievement gap?	3		
How effectively does the provider engage with users to support and promote improvement?	3		
How effectively does self-assessment improve the quality of the provision and outcomes for learners?	3		
How efficiently and effectively does the provider use its available resources to secure value for money?	3		

*where applicable to the type of provision

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