

Nash College

Independent specialist college

Inspection dates 5–7 July 2016

Overall effectiveness **Good**

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for learners	Good
Provision for learners with high needs	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings

This is a good provider

- College leaders have a clear vision and mission with a sharp focus on employability and community support.
- The vast majority of students achieve their qualifications and learning goals.
- The majority of students make good progress towards independence.
- The standard of students' work when on work experience and in work-related learning is particularly good.
- Students at the college make good progress in developing their communication skills.
- Students show respect for each other. They follow the college rules and learn about similarities and differences within the wider community.
- Staff know their students well and the vast majority are effective in encouraging them to participate.

It is not yet an outstanding provider

- Lecturers rarely challenge the most able students with activities to extend their learning in lessons.
- Lecturers do not systematically provide support workers with effective directional guidance on how to best develop the cognitive skills of their students.
- Lecturers and managers do not set the most able students sufficiently challenging destination targets or provide sufficient careers education within the college curriculum to help students move on to voluntary or supported employment.
- Partnerships with community work placement providers are too few to secure students voluntary or supported work when they leave college.

Full report

Information about the provider

- Nash College is one of two educational establishments run by Livability (the organisation), a Christian charity for people with disabilities. The college, established in 1980, is located in Hayes on the outskirts of the London Borough of Bromley. The college provides education and training for young people who have complex learning needs including physical, communication and sensory disabilities, medical conditions or autism, in addition to a severe to profound learning disability. Residential provision is available; however, this has reduced significantly over time and the college now provides accommodation for only 14 students with further reductions planned.
- The curriculum is arranged within five life pathways against which learning is planned to meet students' identified destinations and outcomes through a personalised programme. The monitoring of progress and achievement is through the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) personal progress qualification and internally developed arrangements.
- A planned restructure completed prior to the inspection has resulted in changes to the college leadership. At the time of the inspection, the team consisted of a new head of college, deputy head, an assistant head of college, three senior project leaders and two leaders of learning each with specific management responsibilities.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
 - ensuring support staff who work with learners in class and on work placements are suitably qualified to provide learning support
 - deploying learning support staff more effectively so they focus on learning rather than care tasks
 - providing more challenging tasks and extension activities in lessons to stretch and challenge the most able students.
- Develop further the range of work experience placements and partnerships with community organisations to provide sustainable voluntary work and supported employment opportunities for the most able students.
- Implement a careers education programme that enables the most able students to explore the range of options available to them and helps them make informed choices about their next steps in learning and work.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- College leaders have a clear vision and mission which is underpinned by the principles of the charitable organisation of which the college is part. They have a good focus on enabling students to develop employability skills and access community support demonstrated through the five identified pathways that are at the foundation of the students' experience at the college. Communication between the governing body and trustees of the organisation, as well as the head of college and senior leaders, is frequent and effective. The recently appointed head of college has a clear understanding of the organisation's plans for the college and the implementation of the recent restructure. Useful, early assessment of the quality of provision has been completed and has resulted in a clear reporting format for governors and the head of college.
- Performance management systems have improved and are now more rigorous. The outcomes of observations of teaching and learning inform annual appraisals and a wide range of staff development and training to improve practice. Greater expectations of the role of support staff has led to closer monitoring of their performance and lecturers now line-manage those with whom they routinely work. However, senior leaders and managers have yet to improve sufficiently the skills required for those in roles supporting teaching and learning in lessons.
- The views of students, their parents and carers are used well to support self-assessment, which provides a comprehensive and detailed review of provision, including the achievements of students. However, the resulting report is unwieldy, with insufficient summary evaluation or overview. Much of the detail is broadly accurate; however, the evaluation of teaching, learning and assessment did not take account of weaknesses found by inspectors. Areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection three years ago, although thoroughly explored and actioned, have not resulted in the planned improvements.
- As part of the development of employability skills and via the five pathways to independence, senior leaders give good focused attention to the development of students' English and mathematical skills. Lecturers integrate these skills particularly well into students' personalised learning and use every opportunity to promote good communication and to reinforce numeracy skills to good effect.
- Partnership working is productive and purposeful, leading to good work experience opportunities for students; however, these partnerships have yet to result in continued community-based work placements for students at the end of their courses.
- Senior leaders routinely collect achievement data and analyse the performance of different groups of students to identify and remedy any inequalities in outcomes. Senior leaders take effective support actions to ensure no learner is disadvantaged and, as a result, achievement gaps are minimal.
- The college's transitions team closely monitors the progression and destinations of students at the end of their courses and liaises closely with community providers, adult social care, health providers, parents and carers. However, senior leaders and managers recognise the need to develop impartial careers guidance further to better meet the personal and career aspirations of the most able students.
- The promotion of equality and fairness is effective. Staff and students recognise and value the wide diversity of ethnicities, cultures and beliefs encompassing the student profile. A wide range of themes reflecting the culture of fairness and respect for one another is successfully woven into the content of lessons as well as forming the subject matter in citizenship lessons. Students understand these principles well and demonstrate their understanding in their everyday contact with their peers and the staff they routinely work with, as well as those they encounter on work experience placements.
- Students explore topics such as democracy through their involvement with the student council and through a wide range of strategies deployed by lecturers and managers to ensure their voice is heard and understood. Lecturers and managers have received particularly good training in understanding and promoting British values and have implemented strategies to ensure students have a clear understanding of what this means for them, aligning their approach to the students' capacity to understand and apply these in their everyday lives.
- **The governance of the provider**
 - Governors know the head of college, senior leaders, lecturers and support staff well and have a significant involvement in the work of the college. They receive comprehensive and detailed information about how well the college as a whole is performing and the performance of differing groups of students.

- Governors make a good contribution to supporting the head of college and senior leaders, including through a highly qualified and experienced education consultant recruited as a critical friend and adviser.
- The governing body contains representatives with a wide range of skills and knowledge. They are suitably involved in key areas of the college, for example the sub-committee for teaching and learning.

■ **The arrangements for safeguarding are effective**

- Policies and procedures for safeguarding are comprehensive and effective. Incidents are appropriately recorded and actioned. Staff are well supported in raising concerns and follow procedures well.
- Senior leaders and governors are kept informed of any safeguarding incidents and they receive regular updates on the analysis of data regarding such incidents and any trends requiring further action. Good multidisciplinary working to safeguard students ensures good oversight of risks and safe working practices.
- Recruitment practices are safe and all disclosure and barring service checks are completed and updated in line with the organisation's requirements. Training for designated safeguarding officers is highly effective ensuring well-informed roles and responsibilities are secure. All staff receive training in recognising signs and symptoms of abuse and the use of risk assessments to keep students safe.
- The college's 'Prevent' duty strategy and action plan are appropriate and well considered, reflecting the risks associated with vulnerable students. All governors have completed training and all staff have received awareness training and are now accessing online training.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- The vast majority of students progress at levels expected and enjoy their lessons. Lecturers have good subject expertise and various specialisms related to autism and profound and multiple needs.
- Lecturers use a good range of communication methods such as Makaton, body signing and intensive interaction with their students to engage and sustain attention. Lecturers provide effective verbal and non-verbal feedback to help motivate their students, build their confidence and ensure they understand what they need to do next. Staff make good use of information learning technology such as electronic communication and audio-visual aids to promote participation, choice-making and expressive communication.
- Teaching and learning in the workplace are particularly effective in developing a range of work and independence skills such as problem-solving. For example, students understand the need to ensure that small animal pens are kept clean, the animals are comfortable and waste is removed safely.
- Assessment is comprehensive, includes the views of parents and carers to ensure smooth transition into the college and accurately identifies the starting points and specific support needs of individual students. Progress reviews support learning well, with thorough monitoring and recording of achievement and the prioritisation of key learning targets. Lecturers use specific and measurable learning goals for all students to guide them through their daily learning activities. However, learning goals are not always challenging enough for the higher-ability students and not always used sufficiently to plan activities to take them to the next level of learning.
- Lecturers integrate the development of English, mathematics, and information and communication technology skills well in their lessons to help students improve their functional use of numbers and key vocabulary. For example, a student counted how many buckets of water were required to complete his work experience task in a community gardening project. In a citizenship lesson, students explored concepts such as access to work and discrimination. However, in a few lessons, activities to promote the development of functional skills are not directly relevant to the learning aims or are not age-appropriate.
- Staff are aware of their students' diverse needs and promote a safe learning environment that embraces spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; for example, students feel safe to explore various issues related to disabilities.
- Lecturers rarely make best use of the very high level of support staff available in each group and do not systematically provide them with effective guidance on how to best develop the cognitive skills of their students. The quality of additional learning support varies too much and, in a few cases, support staff hinder student interaction and independent learning. Although the focus on learning has increased since the previous inspection, in-class support tends to prioritise care needs at the expense of learning needs.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare are good

- All students work towards qualifications and non-accredited goals. All students make very good progress towards individual targets for independence and communication; they are supported particularly well by the therapy team who work closely with lecturers to plan and provide specialist programmes. Students develop their confidence and skills in mobility, for example by learning to propel their own wheelchairs; others learn to operate switches to access computer programs and improve the clarity of their speech.
- The vast majority of the most able students participate in work-related learning. Half of these students go on to take up good-quality off-site work experience. Students' views are gathered and used to plan their work experience placements and they make valued contributions to the workplace. The most able students successfully develop their employability skills through qualifications; they complete units around teamwork, problem-solving and following instructions. However, students do not receive careers information and advice throughout their course and they do not progress from successful work placements into supported or voluntary work when they leave college.
- Attendance is good. Senior leaders follow up concerns around attendance and multidisciplinary strategies are reviewed as appropriate to support the early return of students to their course.
- Students feel safe at college and are confident to ask staff for support if they have concerns. Staff work with families to create individual plans to support health, care and behaviour needs as required. They demonstrate sound knowledge of the plans and implement them sensitively so that students are able to extend their time in learning activities and achieve their targets.
- Students learn to manage their behaviour well and they develop a greater understanding of the steps they can take to manage their anxieties. Highly responsive plans created by the therapy and teaching team are in place for students who need them and appropriately reflect communication, health and other factors that may influence behaviour. The college team shares information and strategies with families and relevant professionals who work together to remedy problems as they arise.
- Students develop their understanding of how to use social media safely. They recognise the steps to take in order to protect their privacy online. A minority of students access sexuality and relationship education, although a minority of themes taught within the programme lack relevance to young adults.
- Students enjoy their time at college and learn to show respect for each other. They confidently follow the college rules and learn about similarities and differences between themselves and within the wider community. Students develop their understanding of their responsibilities to each other particularly well. They learn to carefully listen to each other's views, make group decisions and vote on issues relating to college life. In the workplace, they follow directions to work safely and develop their skills in English and mathematics as they carry out their tasks.
- The college has developed strong links with the local authority. As a result, the most able students access opportunities to develop their work skills, contribute to the local community and increase their community presence.

Outcomes for learners are good

- The vast majority of students achieve their qualifications and learning goals. Students make good progress towards independence in class and on work experience as a result of well-planned personalised employability-based learning.
- Lecturers set challenging personal and learning targets for the majority of students, and the large majority of students meet and exceed these.
- The minority of most-able students are not set sufficiently challenging targets to enable them to achieve to their full potential. As a result, too few progress into voluntary work or supported employment.
- Students enjoy their learning and celebrate their achievements well.
- The standard of students' work when on work experience and in work-related learning is particularly good. For example, students demonstrate their close attention to the behaviours required when working with the public and their knowledge of, and ability to use, safe working practices.
- Students' portfolios of work are well organised and clearly demonstrate their progress and achievements over time. Useful pictorial evidence demonstrates the development of their skills.
- The vast majority of learners achieve as well as each other. However, young women's achievements are very slightly below their peers, as are the achievements of young people looked after who attend as day students. Senior leaders are closely monitoring why this is the case and support students as appropriate.

Provider details

Type of provider	Independent specialist college
Age range of learners	19+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	87
Principal/CEO	Mr Neil Rees-Davies
Website address	www.nashcollege.org.uk

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	
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	0	84	0	0	0	0	0	0
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	0	0	0	0	0	0		
Number of traineeships	16-19		19+		Total			
	0		0		0			
Number of learners aged 14-16	0							
Funding received from	Education Funding Agency (EFA)							
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None							

Information about this inspection

Inspection team

Rosy Belton, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Marinette Bazin	Ofsted Inspector
Bernadette White	Ofsted Inspector

The above team was assisted by the assistant head of college, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors used group and individual interviews and online questionnaires to gather the views of students and parents/carers; these views are reflected within the report. They observed learning sessions and assessments. The inspection took into account all relevant provision at the provider.

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
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