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29 March 2017

Mrs Lisa Duncalf  
Principal  
Bridge College  
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Dear Mrs Duncalf

### **Short inspection of Bridge College**

Following the short inspection on 1 March 2017 and 2 March 2017, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The inspection was the first short inspection carried out since the provider was judged to be good in September 2013.

#### **This provider continues to be good.**

The senior leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the college since the last inspection and has acted effectively to address the vast majority of the areas identified for improvement.

The recent changes to the membership of the governing body have strengthened the support and challenge that governors give to senior leaders. The specific skills, particularly around teaching, learning and assessment, that new governors bring to the college are effective in securing further improvements to the quality of learners' education and experience.

You and your senior managers have responded well to the challenges in the sector. The nature of the student cohort has changed and the college now has fewer learners who have profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD) and more learners who have autism and challenging behaviour. You and your staff have adapted the provision very effectively to meet the changing needs and demands of these learners and, consequently, learners continue to make good progress.

You have implemented the 16 to 25 study programmes well. Your overriding focus on providing individualised programmes to meet learners' identified needs is very evident. More recently, you have extended your links with employers to ensure that work experience opportunities are available to nearly all learners who are able to take part.

Learners' outcomes remain good, with the vast majority achieving their targets and predicted outcomes. You and your staff integrate English and mathematics particularly well throughout the provision. This enables learners to achieve qualifications in English and mathematics, or extend their skills and knowledge in these subjects, which supports their progression into further learning or employment.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements and are effective. The lead safeguarding officer is also the college's qualified nurse and is trained to an appropriate level. The 'safe person to talk to' initiative is very effective because learners feel confident to share their concerns and to consider their own safety and well-being. Learners demonstrate a good understanding of e-safety around social media; their online activities are monitored appropriately through effective software.

Through the identification of the specific needs of each of your learners, you and your staff know to what safeguarding risks each learner may be susceptible. You ensure that all necessary steps are taken to protect them.

You have focused particularly on increasing staff confidence in identifying potential risks and safeguarding concerns. Staff receive regular training on safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty. As a result of the training, the number of recorded safeguarding concerns significantly increased last year. Your staff deal swiftly and appropriately with the small number of serious incidents that occur. Staff also benefit from training on crisis intervention and prevention, health and safety, epilepsy awareness and the administering of medication.

You and your staff promote British values well through the curriculum and through effective visual displays around the college. Learners demonstrate good levels of respect and tolerance for staff and for each other. Good behaviour management strategies are evident and result in a calm learning environment.

Senior leaders must ensure that the minor administrative errors identified in the single central record during inspection do not occur in the future.

### **Inspection findings**

- Senior leaders and governors have a clear vision for the college and are committed to continuously improving the quality of provision. Governors have made good progress towards their strategic objective to ensure that governors' skills meet the needs of the college and that the learners' experience is their first priority.
- Senior leaders manage performance well. They swiftly and accurately identify underperformance in teaching, learning and assessment. Actions and support strategies for staff to improve their teaching practice are specific and evaluated rigorously. A few staff have left the organisation through the performance management process. However, the link between teaching, learning, assessment

and appraisal, which was identified as a weakness at the last inspection, is still not robust enough.

- Self-assessment processes are inclusive and take into account evidence from all aspects of the provision, including the views of learners. The self-assessment report is concise and evaluative. However, senior leaders and governors need to ensure that the resulting actions that form the quality improvement plan are succinct, evaluative and lead to the required improvements.
- Tutors identify and use learners' initial and baseline assessments well to ensure that learners complete activities that ensure that they make good progress. Tutors plan accurately the small steps that learners make to improve their skills and knowledge and these are recorded well. As a result, the majority of learners can demonstrate confidently what their targets are and how they have achieved them.
- The embedding of the development of learners' English and mathematics skills is highly effective. Almost every lesson and activity promotes English, mathematics and communication. For example, learners demonstrate confidence in making presentations and develop key functional skills, for example counting and colour recognition when playing competitive sport.
- The majority of support workers reinforce learning well with good use of praise, signing and symbols. A small minority of staff and support workers are not confident in their use of signing. The college recognises this and is supporting staff by offering regular training.
- Transition processes are exceptional. Arrangements for the transition of learners from their school into the college are highly effective. Information and guidance from feeder schools is thorough. In addition, college staff teams work well together to ensure that learners benefit from appropriate support strategies when they start their college programmes. Transition plans for learners who are about to leave the college, and regular meetings with a wide range of external professionals, ensure that the vast majority of learners progress to appropriate destinations.
- The multidisciplinary team's (MDT) approach ensures that barriers to learning are identified quickly and learners are in sessions and ready to learn. The impact that the MDT has on learners' progress is exceptional. The MDT has helped learners to work very effectively on real-life projects such as art installations at the Whitworth Art Gallery and the Lowry. During these projects, staff have carefully planned to integrate the development of learners' English, mathematics and communications skills.
- Staff use information and communication technology well in lessons as a learning aid and to validate and record achievement. Subject tutors have created an innovative electronic 'application' that attaches learners' digital evidence of achievement to their targets. The electronic evidence is used well in reviews, MDT meetings and discussions with commissioners to demonstrate what skills and knowledge learners have achieved against their targets, including their education, health and care plans.
- Learners benefit from a range of external placement opportunities. A significant proportion enjoy sustained and frequent placements. Good relationships exist

between the college and employers. Learners are set work experience targets that link to their study programmes but these are not specific enough. Consequently they do not routinely develop additional workplace skills that would help them to achieve their future aspirations and employment. The curriculum does not currently include a specific job-related programme, such as supported internships, for those learners who are capable of spending more time developing their work-related skills.

- Learners benefit from a good range of practical job opportunities and project work in the college that widen their experiences and enable them to develop new aspirations and skills. As a result, learners engage in a good range of engaging and fun activities and develop their social interaction skills well.

### **Next steps for the provider**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- senior leaders improve the link between teaching, learning and assessment and the appraisal system to ensure that learners receive consistently good teaching
- the quality improvement plan helps senior leaders to achieve the necessary improvements and that the impact of remedial action is easily identified and monitored
- senior leaders establish a supported internship programme for eligible learners so that they can develop further their work-related skills and improve their employment prospects
- staff work with employers to identify clear and appropriate work experience targets for each learner so that their progress can be monitored closely and the work placements contribute to learners' long-term learning goals
- all tutors and support staff are confident in their use of signing to enable all learners to make good progress.

I am copying this letter to the Skills Funding Agency and the Education Funding Agency. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Suzanne Wainwright  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, we were assisted by the head of student services and admissions, as nominee. We visited all curriculum areas, mostly jointly with college staff. We held meetings with governors, leaders, managers, tutors and support staff. We covered curriculum and support activities. We considered the views of the comments received on Ofsted's online questionnaires.