

Henshaws College

Independent specialist college

Inspection dates

26–27 April 2017

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

Summary of key findings

This is a provider that requires improvement

- Many weaknesses identified at the last inspection have not yet been successfully addressed.
- Teaching and assessment do not take sufficient account of the individual needs or starting points of students, or ensure that all students make the progress of which they are capable.
- Staff do not set specific enough individualised learning goals for students or monitor them frequently enough to show progress in classes and over time.
- Quality assurance arrangements are not yet effective in improving the quality of provision or outcomes for students.
- The governing body does not provide rigorous enough challenge to leaders and managers because governors are nearly all staff at the college.
- Management information systems do not monitor students' progress or academic achievements accurately.

The provider has the following strengths

- The proportion of current students who achieve accredited qualifications is high.
- The wide range of work experience opportunities enables students to develop good employability skills that help them to progress to positive destinations, such as employment, volunteering or further education.
- Very effective speech and language therapy has a positive impact on the development of students' communication skills and their interactions in classes and with their peers.
- Behaviour is good; staff manage skilfully the very few instances of very challenging behaviour.

Full report

Information about the provider

- Henshaws College is an independent specialist college which caters for a wide range of students with very high needs while maintaining its specialism for students with sight problems. The college is based on a large campus on the outskirts of Harrogate in North Yorkshire. Henshaws College also provides services for students who are wholly funded by the local authority; these services were not in scope for the inspection.
- The college offers both day and residential provision for students. Of the 67 students, 27 are residential, three of whom are under the age of 19. Of the 40 students attending the college on a daily basis, three are under the age of 19. Most students have education, health and care plans coordinated by the students' home local authorities.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that students' individual needs and starting points are carefully considered when planning for learning so that students reach their full potential and make the progress of which they are capable.
- Improve the setting and monitoring of students' personalised learning goals to ensure that students make good progress both in class and over time and achieve their individual learning goals.
- Strengthen quality assurance arrangements to ensure that leaders and managers closely monitor the impact of improvement actions and address all areas for improvement, including those remaining from the previous inspection, in order to improve the quality of provision across all areas of the college and student outcomes.
- Ensure that management information data is accurate, monitored effectively and produces robust reports of students' progress and achievements.
- Recruit swiftly members of the governing body that are not staff at the college to ensure that leaders and managers are challenged well and are held rigorously to account by governors.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The college has experienced a period of significant turbulence since the previous inspection in 2015. Staffing restructures following inspection resulted in the departure of two senior managers and many teaching and support staff. Senior leaders have worked tirelessly to recruit staff to a wide range of specialist roles which has resulted in stability across the staff team. However, the deputy principal has recently left the college after less than a year in post. Following a targeted recruitment drive, senior leaders failed to appoint a new deputy principal.
- The college has experienced considerable financial difficulty. Senior leaders have worked hard to ensure financial stability for the college. Although senior leaders have high expectations of staff and students and a clear focus on improving the quality of provision, the impetus for financial security has delayed the progress made. As a result, many of the weaknesses identified at the last inspection remain and the pace of improvement since the last inspection has been too slow.
- Managers do not monitor, track or report on the progress of students well enough. Leaders and managers do not evaluate individual targets set for students regularly enough; as a result, it is difficult to judge the progress that students make over time. A new management information system has recently been implemented to track, monitor and report on students' progress. However, this has not yet had any demonstrable impact as targets set for the majority of students are too generic and have not been individualised sufficiently to maximise students' progress. Published data and college data on students' achievement do not correlate due to a number of reporting errors.
- Performance management of staff has not resulted in improved outcomes for students. Although managers provide regular supervision and annual appraisals for staff, performance reviews do not include specific enough actions to help staff to improve their teaching practice. Consequently, teaching, learning and assessment require improvement. Management of underperforming staff is thorough and has resulted in a few staff leaving the organisation.
- The self-assessment process is thorough and involves all staff and trustees and, where possible, takes account of the views of students. The self-assessment report includes many of the strengths and weaknesses identified by inspectors. The quality improvement plan includes specific targets for improvement but too few actions have been successful in improving provision across all areas of the college.
- Staff provide very good support and care for students, but place too little emphasis on learning and the progress that students make. This results in many students making slow progress towards their targets.
- Staff benefit from a comprehensive programme of staff development to meet the health and care needs of students; this includes training in administering medication, defibrillation techniques and autism awareness. Most staff have now received training in Makaton, a weakness identified at the previous inspection, and many use their skills well to communicate with students. Specific and targeted training to support staff in improving teaching, learning and assessment is limited.

- Senior managers work well with specialist providers, the local authority and employers to develop a curriculum that includes a wide range of internal and external work experience opportunities and meets the diverse and complex needs of students well. The 'Starting Point' centre for students with autism opened in September 2015 in response to local need. A new centre in Bradford, opening in response to local need, will be enrolling students in the new academic year.
- The culture and ethos of the college is one of inclusivity. Students are respectful of staff and each other, have a basic awareness of the risks of radicalisation and extremism and are protected from discrimination, bullying and harassment.

The governance of the provider

- Governance of the college remains an area for improvement, as identified at the previous inspection. Leaders, the chair of the education committee and the chair of the board of trustees are working relentlessly to recruit new members to the education committee and the board of trustees. However, with the exception of the chair, the education committee is composed of college staff. Governors and trustees competently challenge leaders and managers about improvements required to finances and teaching, learning and assessment, but do not challenge leaders and managers rigorously enough about outcomes for students and their link to teaching, learning and assessment. Consequently, the pace of improvement is slow.
- Governors and trustees support leaders' ambitious vision for the college and high expectations of staff and students. However, the vision and high expectations are yet to be realised.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Safeguarding is given the highest priority by staff, leaders, governors and trustees. Staff benefit from annual safeguarding training and ensure that students feel safe and are kept safe. Students are confident about who they should contact if they have any concerns. Senior managers record and monitor safeguarding incidents and concerns very effectively and make swift referrals to external agencies when necessary.
- Safe recruitment procedures are followed closely and suitable checks are carried out on staff prior to taking up posts at the college.
- Staff receive training in the 'Prevent' duty and communicate the risks of radicalisation and extremism appropriately to students. Leaders have invested significantly in improving e-safety, which is now very secure and has increased the online safety of students.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- In too many lessons, teaching, learning and assessment do not meet the individual needs of all students. Teachers do not use information about students' starting points or their progress over time well enough to plan learning that is sufficiently challenging for the most able students or is broken down into small enough steps for students with highly complex needs. As a result, too many students do not make the progress of which they are capable.

- A minority of students do not develop independence skills or resilience quickly enough because staff provide too much support for them. Staff make choices on behalf of students and answer questions for them without giving them time to reflect on the questions asked of them. Consequently, students make slow progress.
- Teachers do not set specific enough individual learning goals for students to develop their practical and academic skills. The setting, monitoring, reviewing and recording of students' individual targets are not frequent enough and vary significantly across the college. Targets for the majority of students are too broad and do not match sufficiently students' individual needs. Students' progress in classes and over time is, therefore, unclear.
- The majority of teachers, following observations of teaching and learning, do not benefit from clear action plans or specific professional development activities to improve their teaching practice. Teachers receive individual mentoring and support from managers to improve teaching and learning but this has yet to have an impact on improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Teachers do not develop the English skills of the small minority of students who are capable of working at a higher level well enough in lessons.
- Most teachers and support staff are well qualified. The majority of staff are well trained in providing specialist support; they use their skills and knowledge well to support students, including those with the most complex needs. Staff benefit from a broad range of mandatory training and updates in key areas, such as safeguarding, health and safety and managing challenging behaviour.
- Students develop good mathematical skills through learning activities which involve everyday topics and objects. These include the use and recognition of money in practical activities and counting repetitions in physical education activities.
- Parents and carers receive regular and clear feedback in relation to their child's progress and achievements against education, health and care plans. Parents and carers are fully involved in annual education, health and care plan reviews, receive daily diaries and attend termly parents' evenings.
- Speech and language therapy is very effective and has a positive impact on the development of students' communication skills. Students enjoy speech and language therapy and use their skills well in classes and with their peers.
- Students benefit from a broad range of resources that enables them to participate in activities and develop their confidence and communication. For example, students use occupational therapy and technological resources to check the time, record their views and prepare and cook food.
- Well-planned and well-managed transition arrangements ensure that students quickly adapt to college life. Managers ensure that support for students is well coordinated. Staff work well with families to ensure that students' programmes and support plans meet students' individual needs. Consequently, most students settle quickly at the college.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

- Students develop their confidence and self-esteem well through the wide range of activities in which they participate at college. Students enjoy their studies and develop good relationships with teachers, support staff and their peers. A strong and sharp focus on positive behaviour management by staff and a good understanding of its critical links to good and clear communication ensure the reinforcement of students' positive behaviour. Consequently, staff manage students' behaviour, including the few instances of highly challenging behaviour, extremely well.
- The annual review of students' education, health and care plans is thorough and holistic, involving a range of health, care and education professionals. This multidisciplinary approach effectively supports the review of students' achievements towards their education, health and care plan outcomes. Students' individual needs are discussed in detail and accommodated, wherever possible, by leaders and managers.
- Students develop good work-related skills as part of their courses to prepare them for work placements. These include the young enterprise programme and enterprise projects such as 'The Sandwich Scheme' and making Christmas bags to sell to the public. Students regularly enter and often win awards at regional competitions; for example, they won an award for designing and producing environmentally friendly t-shirts. Many students participate in learning activities in the community to develop their social interaction skills.
- The vast majority of students benefit from internal and external work experience placements which provide a good range of activities to develop employability skills, including bicycle repair, catering in cafes, hospital radio, working on allotments and a recycling project. As a result, many students progress to employment, volunteering or further education when they leave the college.
- Information, advice and guidance for students are very effective in supporting students when considering next steps after college. Support beyond college is good; staff maintain contact with students for two years after leaving college to ensure that students make successful transitions into, for example, independent or supported living or employment.
- Well-managed physiotherapy is successfully embedded into regular sports sessions to develop students' health and well-being and physical strength. Students benefit from regular tutorial activities to develop their personal, social and emotional skills. For example, students describe learning about friendships and relationships between males and females.
- Students enjoy and participate in the wide range of enrichment activities at college which includes talent shows, lunchtime clubs and cultural awareness. Staff invite a wide range of guest speakers to talk to students about other cultures and societies.
- Students are kept safe. Teaching and support staff demonstrate safe working practices in classes and across the college.
- Staff do not consistently promote the values necessary for living harmoniously in a modern society. Consequently, students do not fully understand how these values relate to their everyday lives. For example, although the college has a student council, its members are not clear of its purpose or the impact of its work on the college community.

Outcomes for learners

Requires improvement

- Too many students do not make the progress expected of them given their starting points. Targets set for students are not sufficiently personalised. They are often too generic, which means that students are either not challenged in their learning well enough, or they are not broken down into small enough steps to enable students to make the progress expected of them.
- The college's own data indicates that most students who take accredited qualifications, mainly in English and mathematics, achieve their qualifications and that many progress to a higher level of qualification.
- The standard of work that students produce varies significantly across the college and, in many instances, is not high enough. For example, students with sight problems complete written work that is not appropriate to meet their individual learning needs. Conversely, students produce high-quality food in catering and hospitality lessons and skilfully tend to plants and flowers in horticulture sessions.
- Managers analyse the performance of different groups of students well and take swift action when they identify underperformance. As a result, there are no significant gaps in attainment between different groups of students.
- Managers track the destinations of all students for two years after they have left the college. All students progress to positive destinations that meet their learning plans and aspirations. Two thirds of students progress to work-based activity, such as employment or into further education. The remaining third of students follow individual packages of support, such as day-care activities or volunteering.

Provider details

Unique reference number	121777
Type of provider	Independent specialist college
Age range of learners	16+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	56
Principal/CEO	Angela North
Telephone number	01423 886451
Website	www.henshaws.co.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 or above	
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	6	61	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Number of traineeships	16–19		19+		Total			
	N/A		N/A		N/A			
Number of learners aged 14 to 16	N/A							
Number of learners for which the provider receives high-needs funding	67							
Funding received from:	Education and Skills Funding Agency							
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	N/A							

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the principal, 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 learners and employers; these views are reflected within the report. They observed learning sessions. The inspection took into account all relevant provision at the provider.

Inspection team

Anita Pyrkotsch-Jones, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Tracey Mace-Akroyd	Her Majesty's Inspector
Tracy Gillett	Ofsted Inspector

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