

# The David Lewis Centre

Independent specialist college

**Inspection dates**

16–18 May 2017

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

## Summary of key findings

### This is an outstanding provider

- Governors and senior managers have successfully maintained a culture of high expectations and continuous improvement; as a result, all the strengths of the previous inspection have been either maintained or improved.
- Specialist staff provide excellent behavioural support that enables students to manage their anxieties successfully and cope well in a range of social situations.
- The specialist communication team supports and trains staff exceptionally well and ensures that all students use appropriate assistive technology and significantly improve their communication skills.
- The multidisciplinary team is very skilled in working with students who have highly complex medical issues and learning difficulties and/or disabilities. As a result, students make outstanding progress from their starting points.
- Governors know the strengths and areas for improvement in the college well. They are knowledgeable and experienced in working with complex learning difficulties and or disabilities.
- Students benefit from the outstanding resources on campus and the wide range of external work placements which offer excellent opportunities to develop their work-related skills.
- Improved partnerships continue to bring about many benefits for students in the form of increased work-related learning and community-based activities.
- Students benefit from the enthusiasm and dedication of their tutors and enjoy the challenging and engaging activities that tutors plan for them. As a result, a very large majority of students successfully gain appropriate qualifications.
- Teaching, learning and assessment continue to improve through robust performance management. However, in a small minority of instances, observers place too little emphasis on supporting staff to develop their teaching practice even further.

## **Full report**

### **Information about the provider**

- David Lewis is a specialist residential college of further education supporting students with severe, profound and multiple learning difficulties, disabilities and challenging needs. A high percentage of students have significant medical needs. Students study at the college on a residential, weekly boarder or day basis. The college is part of David Lewis, a registered charity and company limited by guarantee. The college provides a wide range of courses from entry level to level 1 and recruits from 28 local authorities in England and Wales. The college is based on one extensive site with five residential homes in rural Cheshire.

### **What does the provider need to do to improve further?**

- Leaders and managers should ensure that feedback from the observation of teaching, learning and assessments, in a very few cases, is not too positive and that it clearly focuses on how teachers could improve their practice.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Outstanding

- Trustees, governors and senior managers have continued to improve the strengths identified in the previous inspection, specifically in the areas of college admissions, individual learning plans, communication, personal, social and health education (PSHE) and safeguarding. They have maintained a culture of high expectations of students and staff and use the allocated funding very effectively to provide personalised learning programmes.
- Students really enjoy their learning, work experience and the social aspects of college life. Almost all make excellent progress in the development of their communication, personal and vocational skills. Students are very well prepared for the next stage in their lives.
- Leaders and managers carefully monitor the progression of students and use this information well to improve and inform changes to curriculum design. The range of provision is excellent and carefully matched to students' identified needs.
- Leaders and managers give staff exceptional opportunities to develop their teaching and specialist skills and knowledge; these equip them well to work effectively with students who have very complex medical issues and learning difficulties and/or disabilities. For example, five support staff are undertaking level 5 teaching qualifications and three staff are working toward a Master's degree in special education needs.
- Managers have continued successfully to prioritise students' achievements in communication, English and mathematics. As a result, students' achievements in these areas, relative to their starting points, are outstanding. The specialist communication team train and support staff to identify highly effective teaching learning and assessment communication strategies, including the use of appropriate assistive technology. The work of the multidisciplinary specialist team ensures that they focus successfully on students who may be at risk of falling behind.
- Leaders and managers have continued to develop partnerships that improve the quality and number of opportunities for work experience and work placements. They have focused successfully on working with national companies that offer opportunities close to the college but that can also be replicated in the students' home area, ensuring continuity of experience for students. Students benefit from extended realistic work experiences available to them in the college that help them to develop their vocational and work-related skills well.
- Leaders, managers and staff promote a highly inclusive community emphasising tolerance of others, cooperation and respect. Staff and students have a high level of understanding of tolerance and democracy. They are respectful to each other and the wider community. Leaders and managers closely monitor the progress of groups of students to ensure that none is disadvantaged or underachieves. There are no significant gaps in the achievement of any groups at the end of their learning programme.
- Leaders and managers effectively audit the college's performance using feedback from students, staff, parents, carers and external professionals well to inform their assessment of the college's strengths and weaknesses, and to target further improvement. The self-assessment report is mostly accurate. Through the quality improvement plan they

effectively identify the areas and actions needed to improve the quality of the provision.

- Through the robust observation of teaching and learning, managers provide effective support and coaching for staff to improve their teaching practice. However, managers are sometimes too positive in their written feedback on sessions. In a very few instances, they place too little emphasis on areas that could help staff develop their teaching practice even further.
- Students' progression to planned destinations is carefully monitored but the achievement of these destinations is sometimes limited by the opportunities and funding available in students' home areas. Leaders and managers are working with local authorities to identify how students can be better supported when they return to their homes.

### **The governance of the provider**

- Trustees and governors are committed to ensuring that all students are safe and achieve their potential. They have a wide range of relevant expertise and knowledge which they use to good effect. For example, the chair of governors has extensive knowledge and experience in social work and adult safeguarding.
- Governors scrutinise the college's work effectively. Governors are shadowing teaching and learning observations to understand the college's work better. They undertake a useful annual training programme; most recently they have received training in the 'Prevent' duty that highlighted the need to produce learning materials matched to students' cognitive abilities that enable issues to be fully understood. Leaders and managers are currently working with a national organisation and other independent specialist colleges to devise these materials.
- Senior managers present accurate and thorough reports to the governing board. Governors use this information and data effectively to challenge senior leaders.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders and managers have improved safeguarding processes and practice since the previous inspection; the recording and monitoring of incidents are exceptionally well managed. Staff and governors have regular training on safeguarding, and as a result have a thorough understanding of potential risks to students. A strong culture of reporting and openness focuses very well on the needs of the students. Referrals to external agencies are carefully recorded and monitored until the incident is closed.
- Students have a very good understanding of how to keep themselves safe when using the internet at home, in college and in the workplace. They feel safe and they know how and when to report any concerns regarding their safety.
- The culture and implementation of health and safety are strong. Staff work hard to ensure that students are kept safe in all learning settings. Risk assessments are thorough and include all settings and living arrangements. Policies on safeguarding are appropriate and regularly reviewed.
- Managers with safeguarding responsibility have extensive links with safeguarding agencies, locally and nationally. They use these links well to ensure that they stay up to

date with information and to extend opportunities for support to students.

- Records of checks on staff, including criminal record checks, are up to date, accurate and carefully monitored.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Outstanding

- Students enjoy their education and training at the college. Programmes of learning, training and support are designed well to meet the needs of each student. Students' initial starting points are thoroughly assessed before they join the college. Teachers plan sessions well so that students undertake challenging tasks and achieve to a high standard. For example, in a numeracy session the most able students practised multiplication or read through scenarios to complete a subtraction calculation while others carried out simple addition tasks.
- Students make excellent progress. They grow in skills and confidence and become increasingly able to work independently; this prepares them very well for life after college. They engage in real tasks that develop strong vocational skills and have access to outstanding resources for learning. For example, students carry out a particular job role when preparing food for other students at break and lunch. As they become more confident they are able to increase the number and complexity of tasks, such as taking the temperature of the fridges to make sure that they meet with safety standards.
- Staff are enthusiastic, dedicated, highly skilled and ambitious for students' success; they design engaging and challenging learning activities at differing levels according to students' starting points. They make sure that students have clear targets, understand them and can apply the knowledge that underpins the skills that they are developing.
- Sessions are full of purposeful activity; students develop a wide range of transferable skills such as communication and planning activities.
- Staff give supportive and constructive feedback on students' work. This enables students to know how to improve and achieve their targets. Staff challenge students constantly to extend their skills. They set targets to practise, consolidate and build on skills. For example, students who were initially frightened to touch animals developed the skills to hold a rabbit, carry out a health check on it and then record the findings.
- The recording, monitoring and tracking of students' progress are outstanding. Specialist staff visit homes, schools or care providers to assess how students' needs can best be met before they join the college. Students and their families receive regular, detailed reports that give a highly accurate picture of students' development. Students have a diary which provides daily communication with parents or carers on progress and enables them to give feedback. For example, a parent reported that their non-verbal son had gone for a shower without prompting or assistance for the very first time at home and used the word 'wash'.
- Excellent use of the multidisciplinary team on site that includes psychologists and physiotherapists enables students to receive the tailored care they need. This support takes place throughout a student's time at the college. The early interventions by this team ensure that students do not fall behind.
- Staff integrate English, mathematics and information and communication technology successfully into the large majority of sessions. Where appropriate, students undertake, and achieve, accredited courses. Good communication between staff ensures that

mathematics and English skills are promoted and reinforced in the majority of sessions. Staff monitor and record students' progress in mathematics and English and ensure that students' skills are continually developed.

- Staff meet the very diverse needs of students very well and demonstrate extremely good practice in showing respect, for example by not entering their personal space and by protecting their modesty.
- Students' use of assistive technology in classes is very good and ensures that they participate and communicate very well, enabling them to make outstanding progress.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

## Outstanding

- Most students make outstanding progress in developing their personal and social skills. Parents report significant changes in students' behaviour and the positive impact this has on family life. For example, many students are now accessing restaurants and enjoying family outings for the first time.
- Students benefit from outstanding support from a wide range of medical, therapeutic, physical and psychological specialist teams. The teams work closely with staff and families to provide guidance and training that ensure that all specific physical, medical and emotional needs are met exceptionally well. For example, the recent appointment of a full-time Board Certified Behaviour Analyst (BCBA) has already had an impact on students' outcomes and programmes. The BCBA provides a detailed report of students' behaviour which collects and collates in minute detail the behaviour of students. This report informs the implementation of highly specific programmes of support which have had an outstanding impact on reducing challenging behaviour and enabling students to manage their own behaviour effectively and with confidence.
- Students develop their self-confidence very well, enjoy learning and take pride in their work. Students benefit from taking part in a wide range of enrichment activities, both on and off campus. Students take part in inter-college sports events that build their confidence and celebrate their achievements. Students enjoy working in the college's flats, where they develop their independent living skills and improve social skills to prepare for life after college. Student delivering the mobile tuck shop are supported very effectively to improve their fine motor skills when handling goods and coins.
- Attendance and punctuality in most lessons are good. The attendance and punctuality of a few students are adversely affected by medical or emotional conditions. Staff provide additional support to these students, which enables them to continue studying at home or in small quiet rooms where they complete work and achieve their targets effectively and safely.
- Students benefit from focused work experience placements that build on their skills very well. The college provides effective and appropriate work-related activities on site for students who are not ready for external placements. The college has outstanding resources providing real work environments for students to develop their skills, including: a small general store on site; a juice bar; a farm with a wide range of animals; a dog day care and grooming provision; administration and media production. Staff have been successful in securing regular short placements with national employers. This is part of planned partnership development that seeks to ensure that students can continue

valuable work placements when they leave the college and return to their home areas.

- Students feel safe and are safe at college. They are confident to talk with staff if they have any concerns. The college promotes e-safety very well; every time students turn on a college computer a pictorial and written reminder of how to be safe online appears. Risk assessments are thorough and regularly reviewed. Staff and parents have been trained and understand the issues associated with 'Prevent'; however, materials to support students' understanding of these issues are being developed by the college in collaboration with a national project involving independent specialist colleges.
- Day students who have identified personal care needs are exceptionally well supported outside the formal curriculum. Staff make time to meet these needs at the beginning and end of each day. As a result, students' laundry skills, personal grooming and pride in their appearance improve significantly.
- Students benefit from working with an external careers advisor to ensure that they access the right programmes for their future needs; they are supported very well as they prepare to leave college. Staff work with a wide range of partners in local and national organisations to ensure a smooth transition into the community from college.

## Outcomes for learners

## Outstanding

- Leaders and managers have high expectations and students have maintained their outstanding progress seen at the previous inspection. Students make excellent progress from their different starting points, particularly in the achievement of personal and social skills.
- Almost all students make excellent progress as a result of the outstanding teaching and support that the college provides. All students have a wide range of challenging targets relating to their functional skills, vocational areas and work experience. Almost all make consistent and sustained progress against these targets. The majority gain full or unit qualifications at the appropriate level. This includes qualifications to support their progression to further study or into more-independent living.
- Students develop excellent communication skills. The college's speech and language team support and train staff to deliver highly effective communication strategies. The highly committed staff team ensures that students use a wide range of assistive technology, signing, visual prompts and gestures. As a result, students make very good contributions in lessons and significant progress from their starting points.
- Students become more independent in their everyday lives and learn how to manage their anxieties more effectively. Parents work closely with the college to adopt highly effective strategies that enable students to participate more with family life and their communities.
- Students develop skills that prepare them very well for life after college. The college works tirelessly to support students into more-independent living and to access adult care provision. Destination data is recorded well and the college is working with local areas successfully to support voluntary work placements for leavers.
- Students are well prepared for living in the community by the wide range of activities they access to prepare them for independence. Students regularly go to libraries, banks and attend a range of on-site events to build work-related skills through the college shop

and fairs held throughout the year.

- Students' work is of a high standard and they enjoy learning. Tutors capture evidence of progression very effectively through a range of media, which is recorded on the improved and highly effective tracking system.



## Provider details

Unique reference number	131860
Type of provider	Independent specialist college
Age range of learners	19+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	63
Principal/CEO	Angie Fisher
Telephone number	01565 640186
Website	<a href="http://www.davidlewis.org.uk">www.davidlewis.org.uk</a>

## 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)	–	53	–	–	–	–	–	–
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	–	–	–	–	–	–		
Number of traineeships	16–19		19+		Total			
	–		–		–			
Number of learners aged 14 to 16								
Number of learners for which the provider receives high-needs funding								
Funding received from:	Education Skills Funding Agency							
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:								

## Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the deputy head of education and life skills, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the college's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of students and employers; these views are reflected within the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all relevant provision at the college.

## Inspection team

Gill Reay, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Susan Gay	Ofsted Inspector
Lesley Talbot-Strettle	Ofsted Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

### **Learner View**

Learner View is a website where learners can tell Ofsted what they think about their college or provider. They can also see what other learners think about them too. To find out more go to [www.learnerview.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.learnerview.ofsted.gov.uk).

### **Employer View**

Employer View is a website where employers can tell Ofsted what they think about their employees' college or provider. They can also see what other employers think about them too. To find out more go to [www.employerview.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.employerview.ofsted.gov.uk).

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk)

This publication is available at [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted).

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2017