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24 July 2017

Mr Gerry Short
Principal
Homefield College
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Dear Mr Short

Short inspection of Homefield College

Following the short inspection on 29 and 30 June 2017, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the provider was judged to be good in November 2013

This provider continues to be good.

As a result of the well-conceived range of actions you have taken to rectify the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection, you have maintained the good quality of provision and almost all students are making at least the progress expected of them, and in some cases more than expected.

Trustees and managers now monitor and review aspects of teaching, learning and assessment more effectively. Managers make good use of formal observations, learning walks and annual reviews of staff and student performance to identify strong practice and the areas for improvement. Tutors engage in regular observations of their peers. They meet frequently to share best practice and to monitor the progress made by each student; as a result, most students make good or better progress.

You have recruited a mostly new team of English and mathematics tutors, and provided all staff with training and support in developing learners' skills in these subjects. You monitor closely the promotion and development of English and mathematical skills in all learning settings to ensure that all students make expected progress or better.

You have provided tutors and support workers with training on how to improve the planning of learning sessions. Tutors now adopt a wider range of learning and assessment strategies and use specialist advice from therapy staff well; they use

support workers and manage student behaviour more effectively. As a result, students interact more with their peers, increase their levels of confidence and improve their communication and social skills.

At 'Admission and Transition' meetings, managers review students' long-term goals prior to their joining the college, to ensure that the college team has the capacity to help students achieve their ambitions. Managers use this information well to plan individual timetables for each student, which include academic and vocational study, support arrangements and work experience. Staff monitor closely the progress made by each student, and make the necessary adjustments to their learning plans as required. As a result, students experience effective transition arrangements into and out of college.

Trustees, managers and staff now evaluate the destinations of students after leaving college to ensure that the curriculum is appropriate. In 2015/16, all of the 20 students who left achieved their goals as agreed on entry to the college. In 2016/17, all 13 students are on target to achieve their goals.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding continues to be a priority for the college. The leadership team has ensured that safeguarding arrangements are effective. Your staff ensure that students adopt safe working practices in learning settings in the community and the workplace. For example, in the print and woodwork workshops, students follow the correct health and safety procedures when working with hot printing equipment or when using carpentry equipment and tools; they wear the correct personal protective equipment, including ear protectors, heat-protective gloves, safety shoes and laboratory coats. However, a few support staff do not always provide sufficient levels of support to tutors and students, particularly those students with additional behavioural support needs; as a result, the well-being of staff and students is not consistently well ensured in all learning settings.

Staff complete detailed and comprehensive risk assessments of all learning settings, such as work-experience placements and partner-based and community-based provision. In addition, staff risk assess each student to ensure that they have the necessary skills and behaviour to meet successfully the requirements of the course, employers and job roles.

You have revised safeguarding policies in response to the latest guidance and to meet the requirements of 'Keeping children safe in education', the 'Prevent' duty, the Mental Capacity Act 2005 and the Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND) code of practice.

Staff adopt a well-considered approach to the promotion to students of British values and the risks associated with radicalisation and exploitation; they use a

variety of methods, so that students have an appropriate level of understanding according to their academic ability. For example, staff work with external professionals, such as the police, to provide the most able students with training and information on keeping safe in the community, online and at home; they provide students working at lower levels with appropriate training on how to say 'no' when they are asked to do something that does not feel right for them, and students know how and to whom they should report any concerns regarding their well-being.

Inspection findings

- Homefield students live and learn in the community. They participate in an innovative, personalised and community-based curriculum, which meets their diverse needs very well and prepares them for their next step, adulthood and independence. They undertake learning in settings such as a café, a print shop, a farm, a local further education college, a sweet shop, a wood workshop and in a wide range of work-experience placements.
- Staff assess students' starting points well using a very comprehensive system of assessment. They use this detailed information to inform and set appropriately challenging targets for each student, and to provide all staff with details regarding students' learning and support needs. However, a minority of support workers do not have a good enough understanding of each student's needs and their targets to be achieved. As a result, they do not provide them with sufficient levels of support in learning sessions.
- Most students make good or better progress from their starting points; many know how much progress they have made since joining the college. They can describe their improved knowledge of healthy eating, and how they have developed further their skills for work, for example skills in customer service, following instructions, using systematic routines and working with others. One student has made significant progress in improving their behaviour; as a result, their level of support from staff has reduced from a ratio of 5:1 to 1:1 in four years.
- Most staff promote and develop students' English and mathematical skills well in learning settings; they use relevant topics to develop students' skills at the appropriate level. For example, in woodwork, students practise their number skills when counting the correct number of hooks and screws to be used when making a bird box; in the cooking and shop session, students competently use online search facilities to identify the correct spellings of ingredients to be used in recipes. Many staff provide students with appropriately challenging verbal and non-verbal communication targets in learning sessions. They ask clear questions and allow students sufficient time to process their thoughts, before they respond verbally or by using communication technology. As a result, students develop their communication skills well.
- Trustees have a diverse range of skills and knowledge in education and commerce; they have relevant experience in safeguarding and educating young

people with high needs. Trustees are committed to providing students with high-quality provision. They have a comprehensive understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the college, as a result of their participation in a wide range of activities with staff, students, and parents and carers. These activities include learning walks, observations of learning sessions, attendance at sub-committees and the training of staff. Trustees now have full access to a new 'data dashboard', which they use well to monitor a range of measures which show some elements of students' progress and outcomes; as a result, trustees provide managers with a high level of challenge. However, trustees do not receive sufficient data to enable them to monitor and hold managers to account for the rate of overall progress made by students.

Next steps for the provider

Leaders and trustees should ensure that:

- all support workers participate in additional training to ensure that they understand fully the potential risks for students, their support needs and the targets to be achieved by each student; and that they use information on these matters effectively to provide tutors and students with sufficient levels of support, and to safeguard their well-being
- they receive sufficiently detailed information so that they can monitor closely the proportion of students who are making good or better progress, and ensure that staff take appropriate steps to ensure that all students make the progress of which they are capable.

Yours sincerely

Denise Olander

Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection we were assisted by the assistant principal, teaching, learning and assessment, as nominee. We met trustees, leaders, managers and tutors. We visited many of the community-based learning sessions, the café, the sweet shop, vocational workshops and external work experience placements to observe teaching, learning and assessment and to look at students' work. We spoke to students and parents and carers, and held meetings with staff and managers. We reviewed key documents, including those relating to self-assessment, performance and safeguarding. We considered the views of students by reviewing the comments received on Ofsted's online questionnaires.