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3 January 2018

Richard Gargon
Principal
Young Epilepsy (The National Centre for Young People with Epilepsy)
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Dear Mr Gargon

Short inspection of Young Epilepsy (The National Centre for Young People with Epilepsy)

Following the short inspection on 28–29 November 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 January 2014.

This provider continues to be good.

Since the previous inspection, senior leaders, managers and governors have continued to provide a consistently good quality of education for students at St Piers College, Young Epilepsy. A significant restructure of the management team and your appointment as principal have provided permanent and more-coherent management. This has enabled a clearer focus on personalised learning for all students so that they can achieve their stretching, but realistic, goals.

Significant investment in the accommodation and specialist facilities for students has improved their learning experiences. They now benefit from modern facilities such as the sensory room, swimming pool, creative arts room, kitchen and a specialist facility for students with autistic spectrum condition. As a result, students are able to learn and develop their skills towards independence in safe and appropriate settings.

Since the previous inspection, leaders have planned better to take account of students' movement from the school to college. This means that they better support students' transitions and that staff can share good practice and resources. Staff know their students very well, including those who have highly complex needs, and are able to adapt their teaching successfully to meet those needs. Teaching staff can very ably communicate, orally, the progress that each student is making, but they do not always record this progress sufficiently well in documents.

Students gain valuable skills, including English and mathematics skills and interpersonal skills, through work-related activities; for example, they use iPads to identify prices and recognise words. They also develop good teamworking skills, learn to listen carefully to instructions and learn to concentrate for longer periods. Staff consider the starting points of students and their future aims and aspirations when planning work experience opportunities. The vast majority of students for whom it is appropriate undertake some form of work experience or work-related activity either in the college or, for a number of students, outside. The number of students progressing into employment and independent living has increased because college staff take a more focused and forthright approach at review meetings. However, there are still too many students whose planned destination is to live with parents, and who do not undertake any activity to help them get a job or gain greater independence.

Leaders and managers have responded well to the special educational needs and disability code of practice, and to the 'Prevent' duty, both of which have become requirements since the previous inspection.

Safeguarding is effective.

Students feel safe at the college and are positive about their experiences. They have a good understanding about how to keep themselves safe, including when they are online. Staff and students understand the system for reporting safeguarding concerns, and to whom they need to report. The designated safeguarding lead and team of safeguarding leads are trained well for their roles. All staff and governors receive regular training and updates, including specific training to help them understand the particular vulnerabilities of their cohort of students. They have received training, for example, on bruising and injuries that these students might sustain.

Staff keep a strong focus on safeguarding and security throughout the college. Risk assessments are regularly undertaken and staff take appropriate precautions to safeguard students, for example closing off part of a road when students are working at the farm. Support workers and teachers keep a good focus on students' safety in the classrooms and in specialist workspaces. Students benefit from very good travel training and take frequent trips off-site. They learn how to identify potential risks while moving along roads, and this helps them to keep themselves safe when out.

Staff record and track incidents on a detailed, bespoke tracking system. This helps them to monitor all risks and incidents across the organisation, including health and safety, accidents, medication use, behaviour and safeguarding. As a result, the designated safeguarding lead can easily identify trends by individual student or by incident type. Staff have a full picture of a student and they can notice early any small changes in behaviour or attitude that might indicate that something is wrong.

Managers recruit staff carefully, and adhere to safer recruitment procedures. No member of staff starts employment unless all pre-employment checks are complete. Staff are encouraged to report immediately any concerns, however small. Leaders

and managers deal quickly with any concerns about a member of staff's conduct and follow appropriate procedures with external agencies. Thorough staff induction supports staff in understanding their responsibilities with regard to safeguarding, including the 'Prevent' duty, and how these might apply to the students at the college and in wider social settings. Employers who take students on work experience receive training on managing disabilities in their workplace. Staff tell them about each student's personal emergency evacuation plan, but they do not currently give employers any general training on safeguarding.

Inspection findings

- Leaders, managers and governors know the college well and correctly identify areas that require further improvement. Effective action means that you have maintained the strengths identified at the previous inspection. However, progress against some of the areas for improvement at the previous inspection has been slow.
- Students enjoy their learning. They take part in a range of varied and interesting lessons where they make good progress and develop practical skills and skills for life. For example, by taking part in a yoga class, students become calmer and develop improved balance and posture.
- Staff use the outcomes of initial assessment and education, health and care plans (EHC plans) well to plan learning and assessment. Staff know their students and as a result understand their individual needs.
- Teachers and support staff do not all record sufficiently the progress that students make. A new target monitoring form has been introduced this term but tutors do not all use this effectively enough so that students know what they have achieved and know what they need to improve. As a result, not all staff challenge students to make the progress they can, and they do not record small steps towards long-term goals well enough. Too often comments on student progress recorded by staff are descriptive rather than evaluative. Staff do not always write down progress against communication, social skills, practical and academic targets.
- A minority of teachers use tracking sheets displayed in their classrooms to show clearly the targets that students achieve and those that still require work. They also make sure that support staff complete the daily target monitoring sheets. However, the sheets do not always clearly evidence the reasons for the progress or regress that the student has made.
- Managers have developed good partnerships with local authorities. Staff update EHC plans well for review meetings, reviewing outcomes and setting appropriate targets. Managers have taken the lead when working with more than 30 local authorities and London boroughs to make sure that outcomes are fit for purpose.
- Students and parents know what their goals are and, broadly, the progress made against them when they attend the review meetings. However, records of progress on the EHC plans are too often general and descriptive, rather than evaluative. They do not say clearly enough what the student can now do in practical terms.
- Leaders and managers make effective use of funding to provide highly personalised learning and a good level of support. This helps students to

concentrate, develop their skills and make progress through a wide variety of appropriate activities, which they enjoy.

- Almost all students now follow courses that lead to qualifications, and most achieve some qualification at college. Leaders and managers recognise that students at entry level need a wider range of courses, for example in horticulture, to meet their increasingly complex needs.
- Managers organise a good range of work experience and work-related activity for students and so the vast majority develop skills and attitudes that will support them into employment, voluntary work and independent living. Job coaches support students in their work settings to develop the skills required for the work and to prepare them for employment. An increasing number of students now progress to positive destinations.
- A minority of students still have destinations that do not make the most of what they can do. Staff are taking action and working with local authorities at review meetings to support students better to reach destinations that are more suitable. College leaders and managers are developing a supported internship programme to offer a wider range of progression options for students.
- Although leaders and managers introduced impartial careers advice and guidance across the college in early 2017, it is too early to see the full impact of this on the work experience opportunities and the progression and destinations of students. However, early signs are that this service has begun to improve the choices open to current students and the skills and understanding of teachers.
- Managers and staff provide a community where students feel safe and can voice their views and make choices within a respectful and tolerant environment. Students respect each other and their teachers in a very positive learning environment. They demonstrate positive behaviour and there is a calm atmosphere throughout the college. Staff integrate British values well into areas of learning, using practical examples.
- An advocacy service makes sure that student voices are heard in college decision-making processes. In particular, staff support students with non-verbal communication well to communicate their thoughts and feelings and raise any concerns.
- Staff increasingly share best practice identified in teaching, learning and assessment across curriculum areas. A number of staff work as internal trainers to continue the development of the workforce. The 34 job coaches receive external training to increase their skills and support their development and that of their students.

Next steps for the provider

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- managers continue to develop effective monitoring and reporting of the progress that students make, including the development of the skills and small incremental steps towards independence that they achieve.

- teachers put in place realistic and challenging milestones, so that students can progress at a rate appropriate to their potential and staff can measure, assess and report on that progress more effectively
- managers increase the opportunities for students to progress to positive destinations, for example through the introduction of a more widespread supported internship programme within the organisation
- managers fully embed the work of the impartial careers advice and guidance service across the college to increase external work experience opportunities and the progression and destination options for students
- employers receive general safeguarding training when they take students on work experience placements.

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

Yours sincerely

Judy Lye-Forster
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, the principal, as nominee, assisted the inspection team. We held meetings with your senior leaders, governors, managers and teaching staff. We observed teaching, learning and assessment in classrooms and specialist areas, at times accompanied by members of your staff. We spoke with students, teachers and support workers. We visited a former student in their workplace and spoke to them and their employer. We observed internal work-related activity. We reviewed key documents, including those relating to safeguarding, performance and improvement, self-assessment, staff development, and student progression and destinations. We reviewed assessed work and tracking systems. We considered the views of students and employers through face-to-face discussions and through Ofsted's online questionnaires.