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13 March 2018

Ms Corine van Barneveld
Principal
Sheiling College
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Dear Ms Barneveld

Short inspection of Sheiling College

Following the short inspection on 7 and 8 February 2018, 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 December 2014.

This provider continues to be good.

Leaders and managers continue to provide a good educational experience for learners. Your ambitious team of staff are passionate about the work they do. They are keen to try new ways of working that are helping learners to achieve their potential. Trustees and senior leaders have managed a period of significant transition well. Staff who were previously unpaid co-workers now benefit from more standard employment practices. For example, all now have full employment status and benefit from the opportunities that a clear career structure provides.

You and your leadership team have made good progress in tackling most of the areas for improvement from the previous inspection. You have responded well to meeting the increasingly complex needs of your learners by providing good staff development and focused training to support and manage specific learning difficulties or medical conditions. Your staff value the good support and training that enables them to meet the needs of your learners.

Your staff work well with the local authorities that commission places. Many local authorities respond positively to the feedback you give to them on the quality of the education, health and care (EHC) plans they produce. As a result, the majority of EHC plans now contain more useful information about the young person applying to college and long-term goals that are more relevant and realistic than in the past.

Your leaders and managers are able to describe the strengths and weaknesses of the college. However, some information is 'broad-brush' and the self-assessment and quality improvement arrangements do not reflect the college's key strengths

and where it needs to improve closely enough. Much of the self-assessment report is descriptive, insufficiently evaluative and does not clearly identify the impact that the college has on its learners' progress. This was an area for development at the previous inspection.

Safeguarding is effective.

Senior leaders and managers have made good progress in adapting and developing safeguarding arrangements to meet the needs of the changing nature of the learner group. The college is making an appropriate response to the requirements of the 'Prevent' duty. Relevant staff are aware which learners are at risk and know what actions are needed to keep them safe from extremism or radicalisation. The good pre-enrolment information and actions to identify learners' needs ensure that college staff have the appropriate measures in place at an early stage.

The wide range of effective staff development activities gives staff the confidence and skills to handle challenging situations where learners become distressed or try to self-harm. Risk assessments are strongly focused on each individual learner and, where necessary, staff work together very well in the best interests of the learner. For example, the college nurse provides good training to help education staff support learners with epilepsy well.

Staff know their learners well. They are quick to spot any changes in the behaviour or emotional condition of learners with little or no verbal communication that require further investigation. Learners, many for the first time, are encouraged to say how they feel at the start of each day. They develop an understanding of their feelings and why they feel the way they do.

The use of Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards is appropriate and well managed. Specialist staff assess the mental capacity of each student in relation to different situations and where necessary appropriate safeguards are put in place. Actions to ensure that all learners are safe online are effective. Senior leaders identified the need to ensure that the most able learners had suitable knowledge and understanding to keep themselves safe online and, in particular, when using social media sites. A knowledgeable college information technology technician keeps all relevant college staff up to date about any new risks and dangers associated with using social media or other internet activities.

The recording of safeguarding incidents and concerns is detailed and thorough. Actions taken and the role of non-college partners are clear. Any lessons learned from incidents and subsequent responses are appropriately recorded and, where necessary, senior leaders make changes in policy or practice.

Inspection findings

- During this inspection we explored several key lines of enquiry together. We examined how well the good quality of provision was being maintained. We also explored the quality of target-setting and learners' progress in English and

mathematics. In addition, we examined the quality of work experience and careers advice and guidance in helping learners make effective choices about their futures. Finally, we investigated the appropriateness of destinations for learners.

- Trustees', leaders' and managers' strong strategic vision ensures that the college continues to develop and improve. They are ambitious and recognise the need to adapt to the changing needs of learners, both by investing in the campus and by expanding the range of opportunities and experiences for learners. Leaders have effective plans in place to improve learners' contribution to trustee or senior management meetings.
- Learners make very good progress towards their planned learning and independence goals. Staff assess learners' starting points well using a very comprehensive system of assessment. Staff use this detailed information to develop appropriate targets for each learner and provide all staff with details regarding learners' support and learning needs. For example, all learners have communication targets that are integrated into all relevant activities, enabling them to develop their communication in a range of settings.
- Learning activities are personalised and adapted to help learners achieve their targets. In a minority of cases, the activities undertaken, rather than the achievements made or the standards reached, are recorded in the progress log. Similarly, recorded feedback to the most able learners concentrates on what they have done, and not on the progress they make towards their targets, what they need to do to improve or which targets need amending.
- The close collaborative working between education and residential staff is very effective. Residential staff know the educational targets of each learner and routinely reinforce the development of English, mathematics and information and communication technology skills in a range of situations. The head of college regularly receives details of the targets that learners achieve and compares the information with their expected progress.
- Learners develop their communication skills well during their time at college. Staff are skilled at using signing and symbol-based communication aids. Learners who were reluctant communicators are now able to contribute to discussions, tell other people how they feel and make choices. For example, learners use a structured pictorial approach that helps them express themselves.
- Teachers make learning fun for learners. They make extensive use of the 40-acre site on the edge of the New Forest and are creative in designing learning activities. For example, during swimming sessions floating numbers are used to play number games to develop number recognition and order as well as improve learners' confidence in the water.
- In the few cases of learners not making the expected progress, a detailed discussion takes place to identify the reasons for the low achievement. In many cases a simple explanation is available, such as a health condition, change in medication or too many targets. In other cases the process identifies teaching staff who may be underperforming. In these instances effective support, training or other measures are quickly put in place. Where necessary a 'team around the

young person' meeting takes place to discuss possible actions.

- The behaviour support coordinator is closely involved with education staff, advising and guiding them on the best ways to help learners manage their own behaviour. As a result the number, frequency and severity of challenging behaviour incidents have reduced to a low level.
- Since the previous inspection, the provider has appointed an effective work experience coordinator. The good liaison between teachers, therapists and work placement ensures that learners are found appropriate work placements that successfully develop their skills for work.
- Good partnership working has successfully expanded the number and range of external opportunities for work experience activities available to learners, for example hospitality, catering and retail work experience placements in the local community. A small number of learners have successfully progressed from work experience placements to voluntary work after leaving college.
- The college recently started working with an external careers advice and guidance provider. Although this partnership is at an early stage, the careers adviser has produced a few good action plans that have the potential to link learners' study programme aims and their development of work skills with their long-term aspirations.
- Learners continue to make appropriate progress in their understanding of the world of work. All learners access work preparation or work experience placements. The most able learners take part in good external work placements. The majority of learners are not ready for an external placement; they develop social, communication and work-related skills through well-planned and appropriate work experiences that take place on the college campus or grounds.
- At the time of the previous inspection no learners had left the college. Almost all of the learners who have left since then have progressed on to appropriate destinations. College managers have recently started to follow the progress of learners after they left college in order to analyse the long-term sustainability of living arrangements, community involvement, further education and, where appropriate, work. Where appropriate, senior leaders intend to use this information to adapt the curriculum or change the arrangements for learners progressing on to their next stage.

Next steps for the provider

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers improve the recording and revising of short-term targets for the most able learners to ensure that they receive an appropriate level of challenge to enable them to fulfil their potential
- the self-assessment arrangements clearly identify strengths and areas for improvement and emphasise the impact of the college's work on improving the lives and skills of learners
- learners, where appropriate, play a greater role in influencing the work of the

college and in advising the trustees on what the college does well and how it can improve.

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

Yours sincerely

Nigel Evans
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Ofsted inspector visited the college for two days. We carried out inspection activities across the college site. Your head of college assisted inspectors. We met with you, trustees, curriculum managers, therapists and a range of teachers, learning assistants and learners. Inspectors observed teaching, learning and assessment, internal and external work placements, and scrutinised learners' files and other key documents.