

Foxes Academy

Independent specialist college

Inspection dates

13–15 June 2018

| Overall effectiveness | | Outstanding |
|--|--------------------|--|
| Effectiveness of leadership and management | Outstanding | High needs learners Outstanding |
| Quality of teaching, learning and assessment | Outstanding | |
| Personal development, behaviour and welfare | Outstanding | |
| Outcomes for learners | Outstanding | |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | | Outstanding |

Summary of key findings

This is an outstanding provider

- Learners epitomise the values of staying safe and healthy, enjoying and achieving their qualifications, becoming independent and contributing positively to society.
- All learners achieve outstanding results and gain nationally recognised qualifications.
- Learners make exceptional progress in developing their confidence, communication and interpersonal skills, enabling them to make their views known effectively and contribute to improving the college.
- The vast majority of learners gain long-term employment or are successful in moving into independent living accommodation.
- The curriculum and range of support, such as speech and language therapy, are very well designed and delivered. They raise learners' aspirations and enable them to develop their independence and work skills very well.
- Partnerships with employers are excellent and productive, assisting learners to enjoy highly effective work experience or work placements. The real working environment of the Foxes Hotel enhances the experiences of learners very successfully.
- Leaders and managers have created a highly positive and very welcoming atmosphere in which all learners thrive.
- Since the previous inspection, leaders and managers have increased the range and types of support for learners. For example, learners greatly benefit from receiving individual therapies, including speech and language, dog therapy and support for their mental health through cognitive behavioural therapy.
- Learners and all staff are very vigilant about safeguarding and protection, creating a thoughtful and considerate culture in which learners feel safe.
- Learners experience highly effective teaching, learning and assessment.
- Leaders have successfully maintained outstanding teaching despite a large turnover of tutors and support staff.
- Well-planned training for tutors and support staff is improving and refining their skills, expertise and qualifications further. As a result, learners make outstanding progress.

Full report

Information about the provider

- Foxes Academy, located in Minehead, Somerset is an independent residential specialist college and training hotel for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. It takes learners from across the country whose disabilities include hearing impairments, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), and autism spectrum disorder (ASD).
- The focus of the college is on training learners for working in the catering and hospitality industry. It has a fully operational hotel that is open to the public. Learners live in residential houses throughout Minehead and are matched to each house depending upon their ability and the progress they make while at Foxes. They learn independent living skills and experience community-based learning, which also prepares them for life after college.
- There is full employment in the local area and this has resulted in difficulties in the recruitment of staff. Since the last inspection Foxes Academy has become part of the Aurora Group. It retains its autonomy with oversight by the main board of directors and a link governor.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Governors, leaders and managers should make sure that all tutors and support staff set more challenging targets for all learners.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- Leadership and management are outstanding because leaders and managers ensure that learners continue to achieve outstanding results and gain nationally recognised qualifications. They raise learners' aspirations by providing a highly engaging curriculum that combines learning about work and learning through work.
- The curriculum is extremely well conceived and planned. Leaders and managers adapt activities to meet the wide range and complex needs of learners. They benefit significantly from working with the public in the authentic work environment of the hotel. They learn to become independent while being supervised in a professional workplace.
- Leaders and managers provide excellent advice and guidance for learners that prepare them very well for life after college. Learners receive high-quality guidance before they enter the college, during their programmes and after they leave. The continuing contact that managers and tutors maintain with learners after they leave Foxes enables managers to evaluate their success accurately in preparing learners for independence.
- Staff engage with parents and local authorities very successfully in completing education, health and care (EHC) plans. The exceptional clarity of the support and the personalised planning for each learner enables learners, their parents and tutors to measure learners' progress with ease. Consequently, they continually refine goals to bring about further improvements in helping learners develop new skills. Learners find the 'learner-friendly' version of the EHC plan very helpful when reviewing their progress and goals.
- Leaders and managers carried out the recommendations from the last inspection swiftly and have continued to make improvements. For example, improvements to the quality of teaching in literacy and numeracy ensure that learners' experiences are of the highest quality. Changes to how learners give feedback to, and receive feedback from, the college further refine learners' communication skills and develop their confidence exceptionally well. Leaders act on the feedback received, such as changing some work shifts and providing additional training on how to welcome clients and residents to the hotel.
- Partnerships and liaison with small and national employers, local authorities, schools, national charities and external agencies are highly successful. Senior managers make excellent use of these links in arranging high-quality work experience or work placements for learners when they return home for holidays or in their final year. The arrangements also facilitate the very smooth transition of learners into the college and, on leaving, into supported living or employment.
- Managers provide high levels of support to external work experience providers to prepare and manage each work placement. This includes training on safeguarding and understanding and supporting learners' specific needs.
- Leaders and managers evaluate all aspects of the college's work insightfully and with careful attention to detail and data. The self-assessment process involves governors, staff and learners and is effective in bringing about improvements. As a result, learners have contributed very well to improving tutorials and the recruitment of staff.
- Leaders have been successful in recruiting new staff in spite of competition for staff

arising from high employment rates in the area.

- Managers, tutors and support staff improve their professional practice as a result of regular and careful oversight of their performance. They undertake highly effective training and qualifications arising from appraisals of their work. Many staff are highly competent and well qualified in therapeutic support and have gained appropriate qualifications in health and social care, enabling them to support the learners even more effectively.
- Leaders and managers identify areas for improvement quickly in teaching and assessment through observing learning and giving well-considered feedback to tutors and support staff. They subsequently embark on regular and effective professional development that routinely improves teaching and learning. As a result, tutors and support staff have improved their skills and knowledge in managing behaviour, and adapting activities for learners to enhance participate fully.
- Leaders acted decisively to ensure that learners were not disadvantaged when several tutors left the college. Robust systems to train support staff to become qualified tutors and develop their skills and expertise in teaching and assessing learners are highly effective. The process ensures that new tutors know how to get the very best out of learners through their high expectations.
- Leaders and managers carefully and regularly scrutinise how learners perform in their programmes to identify any differences that require remedial action. They take action promptly where learners fall behind. Currently, there are no gaps in performance of different groups of learners.
- Staff, managers and leaders promote understanding of diversity very well and with commitment throughout the college and the hotel. Tutorials, lessons and modelling how to work with learners contribute strongly to learners' understanding of this concept.

The governance of the provider

- Governors have excellent experience and are well informed about the leadership, management and performance of learners. They provide very good support and challenge to leaders.
- Governors know the strengths and areas for improvement of the college exceptionally well and contribute strongly to the self-assessment process. For example, a governor stays at the hotel, speaks regularly with staff and learners, and has a good understanding of specialist colleges and the hospitality industry.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Learners feel safe. Staff put into practice lessons learned from safeguarding issues. The very active and forward-thinking approach of staff towards protecting learners results in a culture of safety. Learners in tutorials and lessons or on external visits learn how to keep themselves safe, for example with respect to grooming, social media and online safety.
- Staff receive regular training and updating on safeguarding matters, including current government priorities. For example, staff have received effective training in the 'Prevent'

duty. The 'Prevent' action plan is up to date and comprehensive.

- Communication between residential staff, tutors and therapy staff about safeguarding and risks is good, ensuring that concerns are dealt with quickly and decisively.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- The excellent support and care that learners receive results in them achieving outstanding outcomes. Tutors have very high expectations of learners and prepare them well for adulthood and the next stages of their lives, in particular for employment. Learners benefit very well from learning in real-life contexts in the hotel, in their residential houses and in external work placements.
- Managers carry out thorough and highly effective assessments of learners at the start of their programmes. These assessments are closely linked to the outcomes identified in the EHC plans, resulting in managers and tutors monitoring learners' progress accurately.
- Managers take great care to allocate learners to appropriate residential houses and groups for study so that their individual needs are met exceptionally well. Therefore, learners make rapid and sustained progress. Managers respond quickly and suitably to changes in learners' circumstances and amend their programmes when their needs and aspirations change.
- Tutors planning supports learners' development of English and mathematics very diligently. Activities are well considered and prepare learners thoroughly for taking their qualifications. Learners develop essential daily living skills such as money management as part of independent living training in their residential settings. Consequently, many learners make very strong progress in English and mathematics.
- Therapy staff provide highly effective support for learners, and therapists give invaluable help to learners when preparing for employment interviews. All learners receive exemplary speech and language therapy. Consequently, many learners gain very productive work experience placements and find employment when they leave.
- High-quality planning and teaching develops learners' confidence and communication skills exceptionally well. As a result, learners are able to describe precisely what they learn from their practical sessions. For example, a small group of learners presented very well to their peers their acute understanding of safety and food hygiene following a scheme of work on food preparation.
- Teaching resources are very good. Tutors engage the attention of learners in lessons by using bright, eye-catching displays in classrooms. They make particularly effective use of the residential settings where they teach learners to practise independent living skills and engage in the local community. Learners are proud of their achievements and make very strong progress as a result.
- Tutors are adept at helping learners to learn about and make use of technologies that they can use in their everyday lives. For example, they learn how to make very good use of mobile phones and tablet devices and identify and use safe internet sites.
- College staff keep parents and carers very well informed about learners' progress and assist them to support learners during their holidays. They provide help by finding local employment opportunities. They show parents how to encourage learners to maintain the

skills of independence that they have learned at college.

- Learners gain a good understanding of equality and life in modern Britain by learning about voting and taking part in mock elections as well as the General Election. They learn about individual liberty through self-advocacy and expressing their views in a well-considered and thoughtful manner.
- Managers have successfully introduced learner target sheets that help learners to understand their daily targets and support the planning of their next steps. However, on a small number of courses leading to qualifications, tutors use course assessment criteria as learning targets for learners. Just occasionally, these targets are too generic and not relevant enough to the skills which tutors want learners to develop, therefore impeding their even better progress.
- Very occasionally, support staff do not move learners' learning on quickly enough. They sometimes work with individual learners for too long, so that learners are not fully included in group discussions and do not benefit from the interactions.
- A few tutors and support staff are newly in post and are still mastering the skills of highly effective teaching. Training is helping staff to develop rapidly the specialist understanding required to promote the rapid progress of learners on the autism spectrum.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

- Learners take great pride in explaining how they gain the skills and knowledge to be responsible and good citizens and how they help the local community.
- Learners receive excellent careers advice and guidance as a result of well-established links with the National Careers Service. They develop the skills needed to secure employment, such as learning formal interview skills, undertaken with unfamiliar people to make the experience real. The helpful feedback that they receive identifies their individual areas for development and the qualities they should build on.
- The attendance, punctuality and conduct of learners are excellent. Learners fully meet the expectations of the daily living skills programme to attend all sessions on time, appropriately dressed and in a clean manner.
- Guided exceptionally well by tutors, learners show great respect to each other in sessions, during informal times and when learning on work placements. They allow others to express their views and assist each other when necessary. They greeted inspectors warmly when speaking to them.
- Learners benefit greatly from learning from each other about their experiences. For example, learners in their third year support those in the second year in preparing for job interviews and work placements. They also learn from the experiences of previous learners who attended the college. Former learners return on a formal basis to talk to current learners, helping them to prepare for life after college.
- Learners quickly adopt professional work practices and understand the expectations of employers. If they are unable to attend work experience they routinely contact their employer and explain why they cannot attend; they also phone the work experience manager and house staff to inform them.
- Learners successfully put into practice the skills and understanding gained from their

experiences at the hotel and in their residential homes. For example, learners in a local housekeeping placement for one day a week are able to identify and explain the types of cleaning products and materials used. The staff were highly appreciative of the careful and diligent way learners use their understanding to carry out tasks.

- Learners enjoy and learn a great deal from their work experience opportunities that provide very purposeful work-related learning. These are closely matched to their long-term aspirations and career goals, such as learning about food preparation and housekeeping. Learners apply their training in health and safety very well, such as knowing how to avoid cross-contamination of raw meat when preparing food.
- Learners participate fully in many excellent personal development activities planned with staff and based on their interests. Their participation results in them developing a strong awareness of being fit and healthy. They create weekly healthy menus of their choice and take part enthusiastically in cooking, dancing, swimming and gym work.
- The college's independent living programme is very effective in developing the skills learners that need to live as independently as possible. Activities help learners develop skills such as problem-solving, making relationships, teamwork, communication and speaking up for themselves. Within the programme for personal development, learners develop a depth of understanding about healthy eating, portion control and dietary needs.
- Learners make a very positive contribution to the college and community such as selecting charities and energetically raising funds for them. They organise celebration events such as the graduation ceremony. Learners select their peers to attend regular learner voice meetings. They discuss issues and concerns in a highly considered way, enabling resolutions to be found such as changes to break times.
- Learners feel safe on visits outside college and work placements. They look out for each other when they take part in trips. They know where to get help or advice and how to report concerns about their own or others' safety. Regular activities about safety ensure that learners are aware of the risks of extremist behaviours.

Outcomes for learners

Outstanding

- In 2016/17, all learners gained their qualifications, enabling the college to maintain its exemplary pass rates for learners taking nationally recognised qualifications.
- Learners gain well-chosen vocational qualifications and speaking qualifications as well as English, mathematics and information communication technology. They rapidly acquire the relevant skills to prepare them for living independently in the community.
- The college's record in preparing learners to move into employment or more independent living environments is highly valued and effective. The majority of learners who left in 2016/17 gained employment and nearly all of the remainder went on to live independently or in supported living arrangements.
- Learners make excellent progress in developing their communication, listening and self-awareness skills. Learners express or speak their views in meetings in the college and when representing the college externally. They improve their clarity and confidence as a result of the attention that staff pay to the importance of oracy.
- All learners on the independent living skills course make very good progress towards

attaining their learning goals and demonstrate good levels of development that stretch each learner.

- Learners make very good progress in their employability skills. They develop important personal skills and the attitudes required by employers and for progressing in education and independent living.
- Learners attain high standards in their practical work.

Provider details

| | |
|---|--|
| Unique reference number | 131892 |
| Type of provider | Independent specialist college |
| Age range of learners | 16–18/19+ |
| Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year | 83 |
| Principal/CEO | Tracey Clare-Gray |
| Telephone number | 01643 708529 |
| Website | www.foxesacademy.ac.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) | 14 | 69 | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| 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 | 81 | | | | | | | |
| At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors: | – | | | | | | | |

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the senior leader head of education, 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, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of learners 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 provider.

Inspection team

| | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Peter Green, lead inspector | Her Majesty's Inspector |
| Joyce Deere | Ofsted Inspector |
| Gillian Paterson | Ofsted Inspector |

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Manchester
M1 2WD

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