

# Lakeside Early Adult Provision – LEAP College (Wargrave House Ltd)

Monitoring visit report

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**Unique reference number:** 139251

**Name of lead inspector:** Suzanne Wainwright HMI

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**Type of provider:** Independent specialist college

**Address:** Wargrave House School  
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## Monitoring visit: main findings

### Context and focus of visit

Lakeside Early Adult Provision – LEAP College (Wargrave House Ltd) was inspected in November 2017. At that time, inspectors judged the overall effectiveness of the provision to require improvement.

The focus of this monitoring visit was to evaluate the progress that leaders and managers have made in rectifying the four main areas for improvement identified at the last inspection.

Wargrave House Ltd is a non-maintained day and residential special school and college for children and young people diagnosed with autistic spectrum disorder (ASD). It is a registered charity and company limited by guarantee. The school offers provision for students aged five to 19 years. Lakeside Early Adult Provision (LEAP College) is part of Wargrave House Ltd and offers pre-entry level, entry-level and level 1 provision for students aged 19 to 25 years. At the time of this visit, LEAP College had 12 students. This report relates to the monitoring visit of LEAP College only.

### Themes

**What progress are leaders and managers making in ensuring that teachers and teaching support assistants provide high-quality teaching that enables students to achieve their full potential and gain independence? Reasonable progress**

Since the inspection in November 2017, leaders and managers have implemented a range of actions to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. They have introduced a robust approach to the observation of teaching, learning and assessment that is linked directly to performance management processes. As a result, a few staff have chosen to leave the organisation. Observation records are detailed. They demonstrate clearly that observers focus on all aspects of teaching, learning and assessment. For example, observers identify accurately the effectiveness of teaching support assistants (TSAs) in lessons and the impact that their support has on students' progress.

Leaders recognise, rightly, that, at the time of the previous inspection, the curriculum was driven by students' achievement of specific qualifications. As a result, they swiftly introduced a new, flexible curriculum after the inspection, which is informed by students' starting points and their education, health and care (EHC) plans. Teachers challenge any outcomes in EHC plans that are vague to ensure that students make the progress of which they are capable. Consequently, the new

curriculum focuses entirely on the individual starting points and abilities of each student and provides students with different personalised pathways of learning. These pathways help them to gain independence and achieve challenging destinations. Students are no longer taught in fixed teaching groups, but attend appropriate learning activities that better suit their needs and levels of ability. Observations during the monitoring visit identified that students seen during the inspection have made good progress and have developed new skills as a result of their wider experiences inside and outside the college.

Teachers' questioning techniques have improved since the inspection and help students to provide complex responses on their worksheets. For example, students were able to describe their journey to the shop in a logical sequence.

Behaviour support strategies are thorough and identify the specific behavioural issues of each student. As a result, this detailed and shared management of students' behaviour leads to their developing greater independence.

Leaders', managers' and teachers' ambitions for students are higher than at the inspection, including for the development of their mathematical skills. Teachers' lesson planning has improved. However, in a few instances, teachers did not use age-appropriate materials that challenged students sufficiently. While students are able to demonstrate their ability to make choices, for example what they would like to eat for lunch, teaching staff do not always use communication tools effectively to help students engage in everyday activities, such as eating lunch. This creates high levels of anxiety for a very small minority of students.

Further development is required to improve the links between therapy sessions and curriculum targets to ensure that these sessions focus effectively on individual students' needs. A few teaching support assistants continue to complete activities for students rather than supporting students to complete them on their own. A very small minority of students' targets require further development to enable these students to maximise and achieve their full potential.

Leaders have implemented a new approach to the weekly staff development sessions. They ensure that staff receive focused training that is informed by the outcomes of lesson observation activities and the needs of students. Leaders and managers are supporting staff to be 'risk tolerant' when helping students to gain independence. As a result, a few students can travel independently. These students are acting as role models to help their less confident peers to develop these skills within a supervised environment.

**What progress have governors made in developing an ambitious vision for the college and in holding leaders and managers to account to improve the quality of the provision swiftly?**

**Reasonable progress**

Governance arrangements have changed significantly since the inspection. Trustees and governors identified gaps in their previous arrangements and have taken appropriate action to rectify the issues. A new chair of trustees and a new chair of governors were appointed recently. Four new trustees and three new governors have subsequently been appointed to the relevant boards, all with appropriate skills and experiences, including in special educational needs (SEN) and business management. The board of governors and the board of trustees operated previously in isolation. They now hold joint meetings and there is regular communication between trustees, governors and leaders outside individual trustee and governor meetings. They review common themes across the organisation. As a result, they have identified and agreed jointly each board's roles and expectations.

A lead governor who was appointed immediately prior to the inspection continues to focus on quality improvement arrangements for the LEAP College provision and chairs the standards working group. Records of the meetings of this group show that members identify appropriate actions to rectify the areas that require improvement. However, it is not always clear which actions have been completed and their impact, and which are carried over to the next meeting.

Chairs of the boards and the lead governor have increased their visibility within the college since the inspection. The lead governor undertakes joint learning walks with managers. This has resulted in governors having a greater awareness of the impact of leaders' and managers' actions on improving the quality of provision.

Trustees and governors acknowledge that they have been too insular in their approach to governance. They now seek the expertise of other, similar governing bodies to develop further their understanding of post-19 provision within the sector. They have recruited external managers who help them to broaden their knowledge and understanding of the whole provision across the organisation. At the time of the monitoring visit, it was too early to assess the full impact of the new governance arrangements.

Leaders and managers have developed a clear and ambitious strategy for LEAP College that encompasses the vision, values and purpose of the provision. This has been ratified by governors. The vision, values and purpose link clearly to quality improvement strategies, including the new curriculum. Governors receive regular updates on the progress that leaders and managers make against identified actions in the strategy. The quality of information that they receive overall has improved significantly since the inspection and is very detailed. However, governors are not involved sufficiently in monitoring the actions that leaders and managers take to improve the quality of the provision. Reports are too complex to meet governors' needs or levels of understanding, particularly of the LEAP provision. Records of

meetings do not demonstrate that governors hold leaders and managers to account sufficiently to bring about swifter improvements to the quality of the provision.

Appraisal targets for leaders do not identify clearly governors' expectations of how leaders will carry out their roles. Leaders are responsible for each setting within the organisation. Targets are too broad and do not differentiate sufficiently leaders' focus across each setting. Leaders have an accurate understanding of what they need to do to improve the quality of the provision at LEAP College, but this is not reflected in their appraisal targets. Governors have not set direct and clear targets for leaders to improve the quality of the provision at the college. As a result, governors are unable to monitor sufficiently the progress that leaders make in improving the quality of the provision against agreed actions.

**What progress have governors and leaders made in ensuring that quality improvement arrangements are leading to a high-quality provision for all students? Reasonable progress**

Leaders and managers understand clearly which quality improvement actions have been achieved and which require further development. For example, they have revised the curriculum effectively, strengthened arrangements for evaluating and improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and re-developed the recording and monitoring system to better meet organisational needs. However, the new recording and monitoring system is in its early stages of development. All staff across the college recognise the positive impact that the new curriculum is having on improving teaching practices as well as on students' progress and enhancing the expectations of parents and carers. The new quality improvement arrangements link together effectively and provide a coherent overview of the current quality of the college's provision.

The new management structure is supporting leaders to bring about the necessary quality improvement. However, the structure was put in place recently, and it is too early to assess the full impact of the new arrangements.

Leaders have set clear expectations for a high-quality student experience through the further strengthening of the performance management process, resulting in clear actions to rectify or remove underperformance. Teachers receive detailed appraisals that include challenging targets linked to the vision, values and purpose of the college.

Records of senior leadership meetings do not routinely demonstrate a clear focus on quality improvement in the college provision. Discussions relate to the whole organisation. For example, there are brief references to the LEAP College post-inspection action plan. However, there is no evidence of a discussion around the impact of actions taken by leaders and managers on improving the quality of the LEAP provision.

While there is more insightful information on students, their outcomes and the quality of teaching than seen during the inspection, revised processes are at an early stage of implementation and actions are yet to secure the full impact on improving the quality of the provision. For example, progress judgements in leaders' quality monitoring documentation are not yet sufficiently evaluative.

**How effectively are leaders and managers ensuring that recording and monitoring processes provide them with a clear understanding of students' progress and achievements?**

**Reasonable progress**

Leaders and managers have reduced significantly the complexity of the recording and monitoring processes identified at the inspection. They have purchased new software to support the monitoring of students' progress. Leaders recognised quickly that the new system did not record students' progress against their individual learning plans as effectively as they had anticipated. Consequently, they devised their own monitoring system so that it meets their organisational requirements and the needs of their students. Owing to the recent change and implementation, it is too soon to evaluate the effectiveness of the system.

Inspectors identified at the inspection that learning plans were insufficiently personalised. The current plans are detailed and evaluative. Reporting is clearer and focuses on individual needs. Baseline assessments for new students are clear and effective. Leaders identify the starting points of each student in conjunction with their EHC plan. They share the results of these assessments with teachers, who use them effectively to plan individualised learning and to set personalised targets for students.

Targets are linked clearly to students' individual ambitions, including their future employment aspirations. For example, learning plans include work experience placements in areas that will help students to achieve the job they want to do. Each student's individual learning plan identifies their development of skills as 'emerging', 'developing' and 'secure'. Plans are visual so that students can see instantly the progress they are making against their targets. This new approach is effective and challenges students to make the progress of which they are capable. Individual planning for learning enables students to develop new and challenging skills, and gain independence.

Teaching staff record and monitor students' progress effectively against their starting points. Reviews are linked successfully to EHC plans and changed over time to reflect individual progress. However, the formal analysis of students' progress is not sufficiently timely at a leadership level. For example, the first review of progress for this academic year is planned for early December, when students have been on programme since early September. Leaders and managers produce achievement reports to monitor progress by individual students, groups of students or all students. At the time of the monitoring visit, leaders and managers compared group

achievements for LEAP College students with achievement across the whole organisation. This approach is not useful for leaders, as it compares the progress of students aged 19 and over with that for pupils aged five to 19, which is not relevant. The curriculum and expectations of students at LEAP College, particularly regarding their preparation for adulthood, are very different.

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