

Community College Initiative Ltd

Independent Specialist College

Inspection dates

5–7 June 2019

Overall effectiveness		Requires improvement	
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement	Provision for learners with high needs	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement		
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement		
Outcomes for learners	Requires improvement		
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection		Not previously inspected	

Summary of key findings

This is a provider that requires improvement

- Directors have not monitored the quality of teaching and learning thoroughly. They do not have sufficient knowledge of the quality of learning.
- Teachers do not focus sufficiently on students' development of social communication and independence skills. As a result, students do not develop these skills sufficiently.
- Teachers do not take sufficient consideration of the learning needs of students with severe learning difficulties, to ensure that they make good progress.
- Directors do not assess students' starting points early enough, and so they do not have an accurate measure of students' progress.
- Directors have not ensured that all students take a qualification in English and mathematics, so they are effectively prepared for the future.
- Too few students have a good understanding of British values.
- Directors have not ensured that students have meaningful external work placements, that provide enough experience of realistic work settings.
- Directors have not ensured that students receive impartial careers guidance to enable them to plan for their next steps after college.

The provider has the following strengths

- Directors have developed new provision very effectively to enable young people who previously were not in education, to participate in learning.
- Directors ensure that students have individually designed programmes that enable them to learn and make a good contribution to life in their local communities.
- Staff implement exceptionally thorough and successful arrangements to prepare students for entering college.
- Rates of attendance and retention are very high as a result of very effective programmes that meet students' individual needs.
- Staff provide very effective support for students, enabling them to manage their anxieties and behaviours well.
- Students develop their skills effectively in practical sessions.

Full report

Information about the provider

- Community College Initiative Ltd was established in Essex in 2016 and registered as an independent specialist college in 2017. It provides education for young people with social, emotional, health and severe learning needs who have not previously participated successfully in education. At the time of inspection 22 students with high needs were on individual learning programmes, ranging from entry level 1 to level 1, with the majority at entry level 3 and level 1.
- The college offers individual learning programmes in settings across the county, such as leisure facilities, charities, local colleges and in students' homes. Students are matched with learning support assistants in their local area and have flexible start dates.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Directors should monitor the effectiveness of teaching and learning more closely so that they have a better knowledge of the quality of learning and can make rapid improvement where needed.
- Directors should assess students' starting points early to capture their progress over time more effectively.
- Teachers should focus more on the students' development of social communications and independence skills in preparation for the next stage of their lives.
- Teachers should take consideration of the learning needs of students with severe learning difficulties when planning tasks and activities.
- Directors should make sure that students receive impartial careers guidance early in their programme to enable students to plan fully for their next steps on completion of their learning.
- Directors should make sure that students are entered appropriately for English and mathematics qualifications that prepare them effectively for their next destination.
- Directors should ensure that students have meaningful external work placements so that students have a more realistic experience of employment.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Directors do not monitor the quality of teaching and learning closely enough. They do not have a good understanding of the quality of learning at the main site or in the community venues where most learning takes place. Consequently, they have not identified what needs to be done to bring about improvements.
- Directors have not ensured that all students receive impartial careers guidance to help in the preparation for their next steps when leaving the college. They have agreed future visits with the local authority careers advisers but these have not yet taken place.
- Although many students have English and mathematics lessons, directors have not ensured that they achieve the qualifications they need to prepare them fully.
- Directors have not ensured that students benefit from meaningful work placements. Students are involved successfully in community settings but very few of these provide opportunities for students to experience realistic employment settings.
- The ethos of the college is nurturing and respectful of students, but directors have not made sure that all students have received information and understand about British values and what this means to them in how they live their own lives.
- Directors' strategy to involve students who have been absent from learning for long periods is particularly effective. Directors are ambitious for students and expect them to remain in learning. They ensure that students learn in a wide range of settings within the local community and charitable institutions, or by attending more formal settings such as further education.
- Directors have successfully introduced a model based on developing highly individual programmes for students in consultation with families/carers and local support services. A key feature of their approach is the importance attached to responding positively to students' expressed interests. Programmes are centred on topics that range from fossils to horse care and theatre design.
- Directors use funding very effectively to support students. They have established very successful partnerships that enable students to learn in venues near their homes so that they can become involved in their local communities. They actively employ support staff who live close to students' homes and share their specific interests.
- Directors work very closely and effectively with staff at the local authority that fund their programmes. They have productive monthly meetings to discuss students' progress and agree actions which help students to remain in learning.
- Performance management of staff is highly effective. Directors hold helpful monthly meetings with teachers to review their work with the students, and to plan any actions needed to improve the provision. Teachers benefit from team meetings and a range of training courses, often provided in response to emerging student needs. Teachers are appropriately qualified or are undergoing training, and all have experience of working with students with social, emotional and health needs.

The governance of the provider

- The college does not have a governing body or benefit from external scrutiny that would enable them to reflect objectively on their existing practice

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Directors place a strong focus on safeguarding and in particular protection from bullying and harassment. Many students have been subjected to severe bullying previously. Risk assessments of all aspects of the provision are rigorous, and students have detailed support plans identifying strategies to ensure their well-being.
- Directors respond appropriately to issues raised, and provide further training as required. For example, following an incident where a student in crisis who could have endangered others, directors immediately implemented further relevant training for the staff.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teachers do not assess students' starting points early enough or in appropriate detail. Consequently, they do not develop meaningful learning targets as a basis for their sessions. The targets do not take enough account of wider goals such as the development of social communication skills.
- Teaching staff do not encourage students to become more independent learners in classroom-based sessions. Students are individually supported most of the time, and staff do not assess the extent to which students can complete tasks unaided. Too often teaching staff focus on task completion rather than on students developing their skills.
- In the sessions for the few students with severe learning needs, teaching staff do not focus sufficiently on learning. The teaching staff do not use tasks and activities for the development of skills and knowledge. Although the students are involved in activities it is not clear what they should be learning because of the activity.
- In marked work teachers give praise too freely and do not focus sufficiently on identifying how students could improve. Too often teachers do not encourage students to use computers to improve the quality of the presentation of their work. Consequently, their portfolios do not appear professional, and students do not improve their computer skills effectively.
- Teachers have not ensured that all students have the opportunity to learn about British values. Too few students have accessed the good range of available and appropriate resources to promote equality, diversity and British values, so many students have an underdeveloped understanding of these issues.
- Most students have weekly English and mathematics sessions in the wide range of settings across the county, and the teaching is effective overall. Students develop their English and mathematical skills more effectively in practical sessions. A student working in a community garden area carried out research before planting a range of seedlings, putting the seedlings in height order in the pot, following written instructions and asking

for support when needed. In less effective sessions, teachers rely too much on pre-prepared worksheets which do not reflect the interests and individual needs of the students well enough.

- In the most effective practical sessions, teaching staff use questioning very successfully to check understanding. They ask detailed questions to enable students to demonstrate prior learning and the skills they have developed over time. Staff work very sensitively with the students with social, emotional and health needs, having regard to their anxieties. Students develop their good practical skills in these sessions.
- Staff work very effectively with potential students and their families or carers so that the move into college is managed exceptionally well. Staff visit students in their homes, and work in partnership with a range of educational and health providers, local social services and other specialists to develop an individual programme for each student. This often involves many weeks of consultation and discussion.
- The focus on matching learning activity to the interests of the students is very effective, and teaching staff are skilled in making good use of the settings, such as horse care, fossil-hunting, horticulture, music and the theatre to encourage participation. All students benefit from individualised programmes to meet their needs, with a range of activities delivered in their local community, in their living setting, or in FE colleges and in teaching rooms at the centre.
- Most students who have been out of education for a long period of time benefit from the opportunity to return to education in a setting where they feel safe and supported, and where the staff understand how their mental health impacts on their capacity to learn. One student who had rarely moved out of her room and who had received support at home, was able to talk with confidence to an inspector. This was something she said she had never previously thought possible.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

- Too few students receive impartial careers advice and guidance that helps them to make the right choices in relation to their independent living skills or work-related learning. Students do not have the opportunity for an individual interview with an external specialist careers adviser.
- Planning for students' next steps does not take place early enough. Students and parents say they are not clear about opportunities that may be available. For example, one student nearing the end of the academic year, spoke positively about the possibility of progressing to further education but had not yet completed the application.
- Students do not make sufficiently swift progress in developing the social communication skills that they will need for their futures. Students receive high levels of individual support throughout their programme. However, they have very few formal opportunities to develop skills such as working in groups and teams that would help them to participate in the community, further education or employment.
- Students do not have sufficient opportunity for work experience or work-related activity. Only a few students benefit from work experience with local employers that is realistic and matches their skills and aspirations well. Students attend a range of community venues including horticultural settings. However, their programme at these venues is not

clearly focused on experiencing a realistic work environment and on developing the skills needed for employment.

- Students attend well. Staff know students and manage their behaviour carefully and sensitively. Students learn to moderate their own behaviour through the use of strategies to minimise anxiety.
- The staff involve parents and carers very effectively throughout the programme. They constantly monitor the emotional well-being of the students and they act to resolve any anxieties or concerns promptly. Parents speak very positively about the support and involvement of the staff and how individual needs are now being met, following the breakdown or unsuitability of other placements.
- College staff coordinate the specialist support for students very successfully by making links with a range of mental health and other health professionals such as occupational therapists. The staff swiftly identify where additional specialist support is needed. This helps students to remain in learning. Staff make good use of Makaton and electronic communication devices and symbols to aid learning and communication.
- Staff support students with social, emotional and mental health needs very comprehensively to overcome their barriers to learning and increase their confidence. For example, one student who had experienced long periods of residential care due to mental health issues returned to learning through developing a college library. Staff provide students with access to online resources that enable them to discuss and raise mental health concerns in a safe and secure environment, overseen by trained professionals.
- Students are safe at the college and have a good understanding of how to stay safe online. College staff liaise closely with parents and carers to reinforce students' safe use of the internet. Staff promote healthy lifestyles including healthy eating and participation in sport and fitness. Students make good use of local sports and exercise facilities such as yoga classes.

Outcomes for learners

Requires improvement

- No students achieved qualifications in English and mathematics, so they are not prepared for possible future destinations.
- Students achieve their targets, but these are rarely meaningful for students because they do not include important aspects of the programme such as social communication and the development of independence.
- Rates of retention are high, reflecting the effectiveness of engagement strategies. For all students this is a significant achievement.
- Students achieve their qualifications, including the few students who study in further education colleges. There is no difference in achievements between groups of students.
- All seven leavers in 2018 continued to planned destinations. Two students found employment, including one who started a successful dance company. Three moved into independent living and three into community settings. Where the outcomes in the education and health care plan are primarily focused on enabling a transition to some form of social care, students benefit from support staff who often continue to work with students in their social care setting.

Provider details

Unique reference number	144787
Type of provider	Independent specialist college
Age range of learners	16–18 and 19+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	22
Principal/CEO	John Carswell
Telephone number	01245204075
Website	www.cci.education

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	
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+
	9	13	–	–	–	–	–	–
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	22							
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	–							

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the principal as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of learners and parents. These views are reflected within the report. They observed learning sessions in a range of community and college centre settings. The inspection took into account all relevant provision at the provider.

Inspection team

Joyce Deere, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Lesley Talbot-Strettle	Ofsted Inspector
Alun Maddocks	Ofsted Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

Learner View

Learner View is a website where learners can tell Ofsted what they think about their college or provider. They can also see what other learners think about them too. To find out more go to www.learnerview.ofsted.gov.uk.

Employer View

Employer View is a website where employers can tell Ofsted what they think about their employees' college or provider. They can also see what other employers think about them too. To find out more go to www.employerview.ofsted.gov.uk.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2019