

Horizons College

Report following a monitoring visit to a 'requires improvement' provider

Unique reference number: 10090791

Name of lead inspector: Kathryn Rudd, Her Majesty's Inspector

Inspection date(s): 12 June 2019

Type of provider: Independent specialist college

Address: Horizons College
Uplands Educational Trust
Stratton Road
Swindon
Wiltshire
SN1 2PN



Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

Horizons College was inspected by Ofsted in May 2018. 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 addressing the main areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection.

Horizons College is part of the Uplands Educational Trust, a registered charity and company limited by guarantee, located in Swindon, Wiltshire. The college has two main sites, the Stratton Road and Headlands campuses. It was registered as an approved provider in 2014. The college provides specialist education and support for young people aged between 16 and 25 who have a wide range of learning difficulties and/or disabilities, ranging from those who have a high level of need and those for whom employment is a possible outcome.

Themes

How much progress have leaders and managers made in improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, particularly in relation to young people with the most complex needs?

Significant progress

Managers' actions are rapidly improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Systems for monitoring teaching, learning and assessment are effective and closely aligned to the actions identified in the improvement action plan. Managers now accurately observe and evaluate teaching and support. They check the quality of teachers' planning of learning carefully and the targets they set for each learner. Teachers and support staff receive constructive feedback on the quality of their work. As a result, teachers are now better able to make the progress of which they are capable.

Managers use robust quality assurance systems to monitor the work of all staff. They hold staff to account for achieving their improvement targets and improving the quality of their teaching and support. Managers now know what provision has improved, and what requires further improvement so that learners receive increasingly strong teaching and assessment practice.

All learners now participate in an assessment of their skills and knowledge when they enrol at college. This assessment clearly identifies learners' strengths and areas to improve in English, mathematics, social skills and behaviours. Learners' targets link well to the longer-term goals identified in their education, health and care plans. Managers frequently check the progress that learners are making towards their targets, which ensures they are on track to achieve their goals. Where learners are not achieving at the expected pace, managers identify and implement appropriate remedial interventions. For

example, two learners were identified as working below their expected level in mathematics. Managers worked closely with the staff to establish individual action plans to develop the skills required. Because of the impact of monitoring on improving the quality of teaching, most learners now make the expected or better progress.

How much progress have leaders and managers made in Reasonable securing and developing staffing to meet student requirements?

Since the previous inspection, leaders have recruited many new staff to the college. As a result of this recruitment, the number of staff with specialist qualifications and expertise has increased. This includes a specialist teacher who is using their expert subject knowledge alongside the team to develop the curriculum for learners with the most complex needs.

Leaders now provide staff with a wide range of development activities to ensure they are well prepared for the new approaches to teaching, learning and assessment being introduced. These include developing improved teaching methods and more effective support for young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). For example, staff benefit from working with the specialist adviser to improve the use of technology in sessions. The programme of regular staff development enables teachers to use new teaching, learning and assessment strategies. These better meet learners' needs and enable them to develop new skills.

Managers ensure that learners now benefit from impartial advice, guidance and helpful information from college staff and independent external careers advisers. As a result, learners know more about the opportunities available to them when they leave college. Many have raised aspirations, which include gaining employment. Learners also attend events such as 'Employers Week', where they meet a range of local employers and learn about new careers in retail and catering. Learners often use this new knowledge to inform their choice of work placement.

Since the previous inspection, managers have recruited a team of five therapists through a local partnership with the local health trust. This ensures they gain from closer or more specialist clinical supervision and professional governance. The therapists are currently working in staff teams and assessing and supporting learners. They are already starting to develop positive new practice and strategies. However, as the full therapy team have only been in place for a month, it is too early to measure the full impact of their work on the quality of service received by learners.

How much progress have leaders and managers made in Significant developing student's functional skills in English and progress mathematics (including achieving qualifications where appropriate)?

Staff now use a variety of assessment methods to accurately identify learners' knowledge of English and mathematics on entry to the college. They use this information effectively

in order to set learners relevant targets to help them to achieve their goals. Managers use a clear set of criteria to identify learners who should work towards and be entered for qualifications in English and mathematics.

When developing the curriculum, managers prioritise the development of learners' English and mathematics skills. A specialist teacher now leads the development of English and mathematics across all lessons at the college.

Managers and staff have raised their aspirations for learners. For example, managers hold regular meetings with teachers to check whether the learner's qualification level is appropriate and that their individual programme supports the development of relevant skills.

Staff set learners clear targets to improve their English and mathematics skills and learners apply these well in lessons and community settings. For example, learners improve their verbal and written skills when ordering coffee in a café, writing their curriculum vitae or sending emails to the local MP, requesting a meeting to discuss local concerns. Teachers routinely correct learners' spelling and grammar in the written work they produce.

Managers and staff check learners' English and mathematics progress regularly and take appropriate action if required. For example, managers recognise that learners who have more complex needs would gain from further work on developing their spoken language. As a result, the speech and language therapist is now working with staff to develop alternative approaches for learners to practise these skills.

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 looked after children, 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/government/organisations/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 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2019