

Inspection of Orchard Hill College of Further Education

Inspection dates:

26–28 November 2019

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Adult learning programmes	Outstanding
Apprenticeships	Good
Provision for learners with high needs	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

Information about this provider

Orchard Hill College is a non-residential independent specialist college. The college sponsors the Orchard Hill Academy Trust. The college manages five learning centres, in London and Surrey. Courses are also taught in a variety of community settings.

The college has three-year courses for 230 adults who have an education and health care plan (EHCP). Training to build students' skills for work is provided for 46 adults, many of whom have additional learning needs and of whom 16 have an EHCP. Training is at level 1 and below for the large majority of these students. Since the previous inspection, the college has developed an apprenticeship programme for 31 staff employed across the Trust. Six are on the senior health care support worker standards-based level 3 apprenticeship. Five apprentices are studying supporting teaching and learning in schools at level 2, and sixteen at level 3. Four young adults with an EHCP are in the early stages of the standards-based customer services level 2 apprenticeship.

What is it like to be a learner with this provider?

The college is an environment where staff show exceptionally high levels of respect, care and dignity towards students. Tutors model excellent standards of behaviour. They manage the behaviour of students skilfully, so that students and apprentices work very well together.

Students develop exceptionally well the skills and knowledge they need to live independently. For example, they know how to choose and shop for ingredients and make a variety of healthy meals. Through working with a local transport provider, students are taught how to read timetables. They learn how to manage the risks involved in using public transport and ways in which to protect themselves from theft. As a result, many can lead a more active lifestyle. They travel independently and take a fuller part in the life of their community.

At college and through work experience placements, students are taught the behaviours they need to be able to thrive at work. They know how to form positive relationships and how to conduct themselves in the workplace. They learn the importance of being on time for work and how to complete tasks at work in a timely way. For example, they lay tables and set up dining areas for customers in time for opening.

Students feel safe at whatever site they go to. Centres are safe and disciplined places. Staff create a positive environment for students and apprentices to learn in.

What does the provider do well and what does it need to do better?

Since the previous inspection, governors, leaders, managers and staff have maintained their exceptional standards to provide an outstanding experience for their students. They hold extremely high aspirations for students. They ensure that students receive excellent support that helps them settle well when they begin their course. They have carefully designed the curriculum to develop students' knowledge, skills and behaviours, so that they can become successful and more independent in their lives.

The curriculum provides students with a range of routes into employment and ways in which they can play a fuller role in their community. As a result of outstanding teaching, over time students make excellent progress and develop the knowledge and skills they need to achieve their goals. Through running the college shop, students learn about the value of money and how to handle it.

Leaders, managers and staff plan their programmes in detail. They carefully consider existing assessments of students' individual needs and gain information from parents on what students can and cannot do before they start their programmes. They then design a curriculum that is bespoke to each student and includes topics such as working with others, communication, personal safety and digital skills.

Leaders, managers and staff work collaboratively with employers to ensure that high-quality work experience placements are available. At college, tutors prepare learners thoroughly for their next steps, through teaching topics such as health and safety and the importance of personal hygiene. Students learn the importance of following instructions. Staff provide step-by-step support in the initial stages of work-experience placements. As a result, learners gain the valuable new skills, knowledge and behaviours needed for employment and in their daily lives.

Leaders and managers place a strong emphasis on staff training, so that tutors develop their teaching skills to a very high standard. They have a very effective focus on how tutors can explain concepts to students so that they are clearly understood.

Students benefit from high-quality teaching where tutors check that students understand what they are being taught. Tutors break down tasks into small achievable steps. They use imaginative and varied strategies to check students' understanding. Subsequently, students make excellent progress in developing the skills, knowledge and behaviours they will need when they leave the college.

Therapists from a range of disciplines and additional learning support and nursing staff work closely with teachers, so that students receive the help they need. Students benefit hugely from this support, which means they can take part in the full range of activities at the college.

Students receive highly effective careers information, advice and guidance. This makes it easy for them to plan their next steps. They attend trade fairs, hear from guest speakers and take part in taster courses to explore what they might do once they complete their course. Staff work very closely with parents and carers to ensure that students are fully prepared for life after college. They arrange handovers from support staff at the college to students' new personal advisers before students leave.

Most students achieve positive outcomes by the time they complete their programmes. For example, a high proportion of students on adult learning programmes gain employment or move into voluntary work. Those who are able receive highly effective support to move to live semi-independently.

Leaders, managers and governors have recently introduced apprenticeship training for a small number of employees in support roles within the trust. This is already having benefits for the capacity of staff to carry out their roles effectively. For example, staff on apprenticeships interact more confidently with families about the outcomes of planned medical procedures on their children. They develop their competence and ability in supporting students who need help with feeding. For a few apprentices, managers do not plan the curriculum well enough, as all follow the same curriculum regardless of their prior experience and skills.

A few adult students do not have work placements that fully meet their needs or interests. The tasks that they complete at work do not help them develop the skills

they need to achieve their goals.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and managers have robust safeguarding processes in place to ensure that students are safe in and out of the college. They provide effective support for students where there are safeguarding concerns. They closely monitor the welfare of vulnerable students. This ensures that students receive the support they need to stay safe. Any safeguarding incidents are accurately recorded and effectively dealt with by staff.

Senior leaders and managers provide effective oversight of safeguarding arrangements at the college. They ensure that the necessary safeguarding policies and procedures are in place. These include procedures to ensure that staff are suitable for their role. Safeguarding training for staff is frequent, effective and up to date.

At centres, student safeguarding ambassadors promote student safety across the college effectively. For example, they hold drop-ins for their peers, who seek their advice on how to keep safe.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Further develop the apprenticeship curriculum, so that apprentices have a programme that takes into account their existing knowledge, skills and experience.

Provider details

Unique reference number	131948
Address	Quadrant House The Quadrant Sutton SM2 5DE
Contact number	02082547820
Website	www.orchardhill.ac.uk
Principal	Kelly Phillips
Provider type	Specialist independent college
Date of previous inspection	20 November 2013

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the deputy principal and regional lead, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. The inspection was carried out using the [further education and skills inspection handbook](#) and took into account all relevant provision at the provider. Inspectors collected a wide range of evidence to inform judgements including observing learning sessions, scrutinising learners' work, seeking the views of learners, staff and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

Inspection team

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