

Derwen College

Monitoring visit report

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Type of provider: Independent specialist college

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Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

This was an announced monitoring visit, which focused on leaders' and managers' safeguarding arrangements, following concerns that had been brought to Ofsted's attention.

Derwen College provides education and support for learners with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Most students have autistic spectrum conditions or moderate learning difficulties. At the time of the visit, 110 students aged between 16 and 25 years attended the college, 89 of whom were in scope. Around one third of students travel daily to the college, and the rest are residential.

Themes

What progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that effective arrangements are in place to safeguard learners?

Reasonable progress

Governors, leaders and managers have a high regard for students' safety and well-being. They frequently review safeguarding arrangements and make improvements as a result. For example, leaders have slowed the traffic on campus by reducing the number of entrances to the college.

Staff identify and report safeguarding concerns appropriately. The safeguarding team swiftly put in place actions to keep students safe. They work together with students, parents, college staff and external agencies – such as the police and social services – to bring about positive outcomes. For example, students who have demonstrated behaviours of concern are supported to develop strategies to reflect on and improve how they interact with others. Students are proud of how their behaviour improves as a result.

Leaders and managers are very aware of the risks to their students when online. Students benefit from one-to-one coaching sessions about how to use the internet safely. Teachers use well-designed activities to raise students' awareness. For example, during a session about internet safety students monitored how a photograph they had sent to a friend travelled around the world as it was shared with others online. They had a much better understanding of how to keep themselves safe as a result.

Risk assessments for students are highly individualised. Staff identify clearly specific risks, including those associated with students' health, behaviour, social and vocational needs. The assessments contribute to effective arrangements for students' safety in a range of settings. Students are well supported and encouraged to manage their own behaviour more effectively. They become more independent and recognise potential risks. For example, students move on from being supported to travel on trains and in taxis to travelling independently.

Teachers plan and teach lessons that support students to understand how to keep safe in their vocational choices and in daily life. They frequently reinforce key aspects of personal safety, which builds students' confidence. Students are well prepared to work in commercial outlets and in daily-living skills environments. For example, students use safe cutting techniques in the kitchen. They understand the dangers of cross-contamination and the risks associated with food allergies.

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