

The Michael Tippett College

Monitoring visit report

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Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

From autumn 2019, Ofsted undertook to carry out monitoring visits to independent specialist colleges newly ESFA-funded from August 2018 onwards. This monitoring visit was undertaken as part of those arrangements and as outlined in the Further education and skills inspection handbook, especially the sections entitled 'Monitoring visits' and 'Monitoring visits to providers that are newly directly publicly funded'. The focus of these visits is on the themes set out below.

The Michael Tippett College is in the London Borough of Lambeth. The college works with The Michael Tippett School, but is a separate constituted limited company.

The students at the college are young adults aged 19–25. They have a range of profound multiple learning difficulties (PMLD) or severe learning difficulties (SLD), and are with and without an autism spectrum disorder. At the time of the monitoring visit, there were 30 students. Of these, 17 students were on a three-year preparation for work and life programme. The rest were on a one-year 'bridge to work' programme designed to get them into employment.

Themes

How much progress have leaders and managers made in designing and delivering relevant learning programmes that are clearly defined and tailored to suit the individual needs of students? Significant progress

The curriculum for students is comprehensive. Leaders have designed a learning programme with the right knowledge and skills in the right order that their students need to get on in life. Staff ensure that students can improve how they do things for themselves. Students' education, health and care (EHC) plans link well to their curriculum pathway. Leaders and instructors make sure the curriculum is rich in its focus on technical skills, well-being, attitudes and behaviours in preparation for adulthood. Teaching is purposeful in connecting knowledge and skills across subjects. Students become familiar in using these skills. They remember them when they are on work placements, in employment or at home.

Senior leaders and staff have productive partnerships with a range of organisations. For example, staff have strong working relationships with colleagues at their associate school. Staff from the school and college share education practice. One of the benefits is that staff give students the right guidance about their next steps. Leaders work with a range of therapists and nurses and multi-disciplinary professionals from a not-for-profit enterprise and the NHS, so there is continuity of

support and approach for students' physical and mental well-being, in and outside the college.

Leaders' actions are enterprising in developing their education provision. For example, they have put in place a cafe where students learn catering skills. They have set up 'pop-up' outlets in the local community for students to sell the products that they make. Staff are well qualified and experienced to help build and implement the curriculum. Leaders use high-needs funding appropriately, so students get the right resources such as assistive technology.

Leaders and staff are ambitious to do their best for their students. This is a convincing cultural thread that runs throughout the college. They have a strong focus on quality and a drive to develop provision. Staff know their students and what they need to learn. Leaders have made sure that effective governance arrangements are in place. They have set up a board of qualified trustees to oversee the provision.

How much progress have leaders and managers made to ensure that students benefit from high-quality learning programmes that develop independence, communication and skills and help them to achieve their personal and/or work-related goals? Reasonable progress

Instructors are skilful at helping their students build their independence. They and job coaches ensure that students grasp the right behaviours for employment. For example, students know to put on the correct protective clothing when cooking. Instructors enable students to make commercial products. They help improve their well-being at local sports facilities. Students gain confidence to use these facilities to improve their fitness and access their local and wider community.

Instructors teach students the right social behaviours. They are effective at explaining tasks about behaviours, so students know what to do. Job coaches, who work with students in lessons, ensure that students learn these behaviours. For example, students recall and discuss what body parts are public and private. Instructors use plays such as 'Romeo and Juliet' to build students' knowledge of personal relationships.

Leaders are successful at getting all their students into beneficial work placements. Of the 13 students on the new one-year 'bridge to work' course, two are already in sustained employment and the rest are on work placements. However, it is too early to judge leaders' success in getting students into employment.

Leaders make sure that students can study in a safe environment. They work productively with health and social care partners to guide them on therapeutic support. Staff receive useful training on physical safety that enhances their teaching. They use this well to keep their students safe in rebound therapy, for example.

Leaders and managers link EHC plan targets for students well to the content of their subjects and level of their knowledge and skills. They break targets down into short-term goals. They record students' progress over time accurately for the majority.

In a small minority of cases, instructors do not record well enough students' progress over time. This hampers the extent to which staff know how much students have improved. Managers are taking steps to improve this.

How much progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that effective safeguarding arrangements are in place? Reasonable progress

Leaders have put in place suitable arrangements to keep their students safe. Leaders keep central records on the suitability of all staff to work with vulnerable adults. Leaders hold safeguarding qualifications at the appropriate level and all staff receive safeguarding training. A recent trustee appointee will oversee safeguarding at the college.

Staff are professional at dealing with incidents and use an online tracking system for this purpose effectively. Where necessary, they consult the local authority's social services. This ensures decisions are well informed. Staff carry out appropriate risk assessments for activities and trips. The school and college staff share good practice on safeguarding.

Leaders have a progressive handling policy for managing challenging behaviour. In lessons, there is a mood board that can alert staff if students feel out of sorts. There is a strong focus on health and safety at the college.

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