

Short inspection of Hedleys College

Inspection dates:

2–3 March 2020

Outcome

Hedleys College (previously Percy Hedley College) continues to be a good provider.

Information about this provider

Hedleys College is an independent specialist college that is a member of the Percy Hedley Foundation. The college provides courses and training for young people who have complex learning difficulties and disabilities and require specialist individual programmes.

At the time of the inspection, there were 48 learners enrolled on education programmes for learners with high needs, following courses at entry level and level 1. Learners study courses across six main pathways. Ten learners were on a 'communication and choices' pathway, 10 on 'towards independence', 11 on 'independence and enterprise', eight on 'towards employability', four on 'foundation for work', and two on the 'supported internship' programme. Four learners were enrolled on individualised bespoke programmes.

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

Learners enjoy their learning and are proud to study at the college. They attend well, particularly learners who did not enjoy school. Learners enthusiastically describe 'jumping out of bed each morning to come to college'. Learners who have complex needs enjoy sensory activities, which help them to communicate with staff as they develop their independence and physical fitness during exercise routines. Learners behave well and show respect to peers, staff and visitors.

Learners develop new knowledge and skills that support them to develop greater independence and find ways of overcoming significant personal barriers. They benefit from a well-planned curriculum that enables them to experience and learn through cooking, shopping, work experience and contributing to a range of community projects. Staff provide good support to develop learners' working memory and their ability to understand time and timings. As a result, learners have improved their punctuality and efficiency while on work placement.

Learners are safe in their learning and workplace environments. They understand how to keep themselves safe when using the internet and social media, and the risks posed by strangers.

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

Since the previous inspection, governors and leaders have successfully sustained the quality of education that learners receive. They provide extensive support and staff training so that staff continue to develop their teaching practice, specialist skills and knowledge. Staff know their learners well. They plan and sequence the delivery of the curriculum so that learners build their knowledge and develop new practical and work skills that enable them to become more independent in their lives.

Learners receive good advice and guidance at the start of their programme. Staff work well with families, carers, specialist support agencies and education providers that learners have attended prior to joining the college. They gather detailed information to develop clear and realistic plans for learners and their course at college, including work experience and the specialist support required. Learners benefit from extensive therapeutic and assistive support, such as hydrotherapy, adaptive seating, equipment controlled by switches, and compression vests. As a result, learners participate fully and make good progress towards achieving their personal goals and qualifications.

Tutors plan learning very well to help learners with very complex needs to understand what is happening in a lesson. For example, they use tactile sensory activities early in the course, which enables learners to build their understanding of personal exercises and routines. Learners repeat the exercises and use them in their personal care routines so that they become more independent in cleaning their teeth, bathing and applying moisturising creams.

Tutors in vocational and employment lessons sequence the curriculum well. Learners in catering learn about health and safety first, including how to use the dishwasher correctly. They use visual images to recognise and identify the equipment and ingredients that they need for the meal. Learners prepare and cook simple meals at first but then develop their skills further so that they confidently work in a community cafe, providing meals for the local residents.

Learners on the supported internship programme follow a curriculum which is tailored closely to their individual needs and interests and which includes training for independent travel and work experience that match their future plans. For example, learners enjoy working with supportive employers in office environments and providing customer service to the general public in a local museum. Early in their placements, learners complete routine tasks such as filing, and are then encouraged to develop their skills by repeating activities in more challenging situations. Learners move on to designing promotional material for charity events and planning the research for a local heritage project. Learners talk with pride about how well they develop their communication and confidence, teamwork skills and resilience.

Tutors use a range of assessment methods effectively to check learners' understanding and identify gaps in their learning. For example, they use pictures to

communicate with learners and to confirm progress against personal targets. However, staff do not monitor the full range of incremental skills and behaviours that learners acquire during activities. Consequently, they do not have sufficient understanding about whether learners develop their skills to the level of which they are capable.

Learners benefit from helpful, independent careers advice. Staff work with local employers and education providers to enable learners to access a range of workshops and trial activities, which helps learners to understand what they need to do to achieve their aspirations. Learners on supported internship and employment programmes gain work experience related to their long-term work goals. For example, learners complete customer service and administration roles in a range of local venues. They have plans to study at a local further education college or gain paid employment at the end of their course.

Governors and leaders have a clear policy to help learners to improve their work skills and opportunities in life. They have successfully introduced high-quality supported internships and employment programmes into the curriculum offer. Learners make good progress in developing their communication skills, persistence and ability to construct and respond appropriately to requests from college staff, work colleagues and the general public. However, leaders rightly identify that more work is needed to broaden the range of employers that the college engages with in order to offer learners greater choice.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Governors, leaders and staff place a high importance on keeping learners safe. Staff recruitment processes are robust. Staff are appropriately trained and they follow referral procedures thoroughly.

Leaders work effectively with the Percy Hedley Foundation, local services and employers. They provide high-quality therapeutic and communication support that enables learners to participate fully and safely in their learning and work placements.

Leaders are right to recognise that learners' understanding of risks to their personal safety in their own locality is an aspect of their work that they should develop, particularly for learners on the supported internship employment programmes.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Ensure that staff understand the incremental skills and behaviours that learners acquire in lessons and community activities, and use this information to challenge learners to develop their skills to a higher level.

- Increase the number of employers that learners have access to, so that all work placements meet learners' personal aspirations and individual needs.
- Ensure that learners on the supported internship and employment programme have a better understanding of the risks to their personal safety in their own locality.

Provider details

Unique reference number	141240
Address	Forest Hall Station Road Newcastle upon Tyne NE12 8YY
Contact number	0191 2812888
Website	http://www.percyhedley.org.uk/college
Principal	Joanne Rees-Proud
Provider type	Independent specialist college
Date of previous inspection	2 March 2016
Main subcontractors	N/A

Information about this inspection

The inspection was the second short inspection carried out since Percy Hedley College was judged to be good in September 2011.

The inspection team was assisted by the deputy principal, 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

Tracey Mace-Akroyd, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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Her Majesty's Inspector

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