

Ruskin Mill College

Monitoring visit report

Unique reference number:	133036
Name of lead inspector:	Tracey Zimmerman, Her Majesty's Inspector
Inspection dates:	9 and 10 February 2022
Type of provider:	Independent specialist college
Address:	The Fisheries Horsley Stroud Gloucestershire GL6 0PL

Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

Ruskin Mill College was previously inspected by Ofsted in May 2018. This was a short inspection, and it was judged as good.

This visit was an announced safeguarding monitoring visit, following concerns that had been reported to Ofsted and which remain under investigation by another agency. The purpose of the visit was to assess whether the safeguarding arrangements at the college are effective. Inspectors' judgements were informed by actions taken by the provider's leaders and managers in response to the concerns that had been reported to Ofsted, alongside other evidence available at the time of the visit.

Ofsted is aware of the challenges that COVID-19 is currently posing to those we inspect. The impact of COVID-19 has been taken into account in the findings and progress judgements below.

At the time of this monitoring visit, there were 65 students studying at Ruskin Mill College, all of whom were in receipt of high-needs funding.

Themes

What progress have trustees, leaders and managers made in ensuring that they comply with the relevant safeguarding requirements?

Reasonable progress

Leaders have established thorough oversight of safeguarding arrangements. This includes clearly defined leadership and management roles responsible for day-to-day support for dealing with safeguarding incidents, staff's training and regular checking of reporting and recording practices. Since the previous inspection, leaders have successfully strengthened safeguarding systems and processes. For example, leaders have established a new head of safeguarding role for the trust of which Ruskin Mill College is a part. The head of safeguarding provides specialist support for the most complex safeguarding issues the college must manage. Leaders have developed a broader team of deputy designated safeguarding leads, which ensures shared expertise across the extensive college site. Leaders have usefully extended the role of education and healthcare managers. They now act as the central point for all information about each student, providing a comprehensive overview of students' needs and provision.

Leaders have established frequent training to update college staff on safeguarding. New staff benefit from an extensive induction programme that includes training on safeguarding and behaviour management. Pertinent topics include the appropriate use of restraint techniques and tackling peer-on-peer abuse.

Students benefit from positive and supportive relationships with skilled staff. Staff generally manage students' behaviour well. Staff report that serious incidents are rare. This was reflected in the calm and purposeful sessions inspectors saw during the monitoring visit. Staff understand and meet individual students' needs well. This is because staff are well trained and supported by a multi-disciplinary team that includes therapists, counsellors and a medical adviser.

Managers ensure that there are detailed and appropriate assessments of risk in place for every student. Some students also benefit from positive behaviour plans which include useful information about how to sustain appropriate, as well as manage inappropriate, behaviours. However, leaders recognise that there is too much variation in the quality and approach of the current positive behaviour plans. They are now developing systems and plans for all students to improve the support for positive behaviour that staff are able to provide.

How effective are trustees, leaders and staff at acting on safeguarding concerns when they arise and report appropriately to external agencies? Reasonable progress

Staff understand well the college's safeguarding reporting and recording processes. They are clear about the difference between recording a concern and reporting a safeguarding issue. Key staff receive alerts about important issues in a timely manner. This allows them to take effective action and monitor both individual issues and more general themes.

Safeguarding policies and procedures contain useful information. However, they are not clear enough about what staff should do if allegations were received about the designated safeguarding lead (DSL).

Staff are highly vigilant and report concerns to the safeguarding team promptly. The DSL and team quickly respond to serious concerns and report to external agencies, including the local authority and the police, and under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 as appropriate. Safeguarding records demonstrate staff have carefully considered safeguarding issues, sought advice and made informed decisions. The DSL and team have worked closely with external agencies to improve their relationships. This has resulted in such agencies having a better understanding of college students' needs and requirements.

Staff use restraint techniques appropriately and as a last resort. However, they do not always fully complete records of such use. Leaders recognise staff's recording practice is not consistently thorough enough. Senior leaders are working hard to reduce further the use of restraints at the college, and they have productive links with an independent network that helps organisations achieve this aim.

Leaders ensure that comprehensive checks are in place to ensure the suitability of all new staff they recruit, including those supplied on a temporary basis by an employment agency.

How have trustees, leaders and managers ensured that arrangements to safeguard learners and their staff are appropriate and effective?

Reasonable progress

Students enjoy their learning and are keen to show visitors the progress they are making with their studies. They generally feel safe at the college and also understand strategies for coping when they feel uneasy. Most students feel confident to speak to a member of staff if worried or concerned about anything.

A student council that meets weekly ensures managers hear at first hand students' views. Students discuss pertinent topics such as healthy eating, meal portion sizes and safeguarding. A member of the senior leadership team and other staff attend to hear directly from their students.

Students receive effective help to improve their self-awareness and understand how to manage appropriately their own needs and behaviours. When programmes of study involve activities, such as working with tools, staff's planning ensures students learn how to use them safely. Staff amend plans and lessons skilfully to ensure that students remain safe when they are unable to manage their own behaviour appropriately or are particularly unsettled. Consequently, students learn safely and know how to keep themselves safe in a wide range of situations.

Staff rightly believe they have a good knowledge of safeguarding. They feel safe and well cared for. They are able to speak to managers about their concerns and are confident that these are taken seriously. When safeguarding incidents occur, managers and the clinical team provide staff with effective support.

Staff are proud of the support they gave students during the COVID-19 pandemic. They feel that the DSL is supportive of both students and staff. However, staff lack sufficient knowledge and confidence to talk proactively about sexual harassment and healthy relationships. Too often, discussions around these topics only happen following an incident.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

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 children looked after, 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 <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

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 2022