

# Inspection of Farleigh Further Education College – Frome

Inspection dates: 15 to 17 February 2022

## Overall effectiveness

**Inadequate**

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The quality of education	<b>Inadequate</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Inadequate</b>
Personal development	<b>Inadequate</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Inadequate</b>
Provision for learners with high needs	<b>Inadequate</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Information about this provider

Farleigh Further Education College (FFEC) is an independent specialist residential college owned by Aspris Children’s Services. It makes provision for young people with a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder, including pervasive development disorder or autistic or Asperger syndrome traits. Learners often have other complex needs. All learners are in receipt of funding for high needs.

Learners follow programmes aimed at preparing them for adulthood and independent living. Learners study GCSEs, A levels and vocational courses at FFEC, as well as attending local colleges to follow specialist vocational and academic programmes. At the time of inspection, 26 learners were resident at the college and 40 learners were attending during the day.

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

Learners are not confident that staff will take their concerns and safeguarding disclosures seriously or deal with them promptly. As a result, too many learners do not feel safe and suitably protected from harm at the college.

Learners do not routinely receive the support in educational sessions that their education, health and care plans (EHC plans) specify. Therapists do not work closely enough with education staff to develop, share and consistently implement learner strategies and support. Staff do not provide them with sufficient resources, such as visual prompts, or support with strategies to help them to regulate their emotions or manage sensory and communication difficulties. As a result, learners do not gain the skills they need for greater independence in their everyday lives.

Learners do not benefit from studying a challenging and aspirational curriculum. Tutors do not always identify learners' starting points and goals well enough or use this to inform curriculum planning. As a result, tutors do not have high enough expectations of learners. Too often, tutors do not reinforce the standards of behaviour expected of learners through their own behaviour. Consequently, learners lack motivation. For example, learners often arrive late for lessons and do not have a positive attitude to learning. As a result, they do not make rapid enough progress.

Tutors do not plan well enough to meet the personal development needs that are specified in learners' EHC plans. This is because tutors do not consistently plan and review what learners can do to ensure that learners are prepared well for adulthood. For example, learners hoping to study at university are not confident they have the skills for greater independence. Staff do not adequately prepare learners for the transition beyond college.

Too many learners do not have a specific career plan or attend work experience in areas of interest to develop their self-confidence and skills for work. For example, learners hoping to move on to apprenticeships have not met with careers advisers or had relevant work experience placements.

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

Governors have identified rightly that the current model of governance is not effective in ensuring FFEC leaders rapidly improve the experience of all learners. They recognise rightly that improvements to the quality of education are required. However, they have not acted rapidly enough to implement necessary changes.

Leaders have failed to ensure that learners benefit from studying a well-planned or coherent curriculum. Although they have recently restructured the curriculum, it is not organised well enough to build on what learners already know and can do. Too much of the curriculum is poorly structured and does not specify clearly enough the intended outcomes for learners. For example, in bushcraft, learners enjoy activities such as den

building, but staff are unclear about how these contribute to learners' development of the independence and work skills needed in adult life.

Tutors do not accurately assess what learners already know and can do when they start their courses. As a result, staff do not know if learners are securing new knowledge, skills and behaviours. They do not know if learners are studying for a qualification at a level that reflects their ability. This significantly impairs the progress learners make in building on existing knowledge and learning new content. As a result, some learners repeat learning and remain at the college for longer than is necessary to make the transition to adulthood.

Tutors do not use the targets set in learners' EHC plans well enough to plan the curriculum so that learners make the progress of which they are capable. Tutors do not use assessment effectively to monitor the progress learners make and to plan learning that is sufficiently challenging. For example, in English classes, tutors teach learners of differing levels and abilities together at the same pace. They do not ensure they adapt teaching resources to meet learners' differing needs. As a result, learners often find the work is either too difficult or too easy.

Leaders have not put in place effective training and support to ensure that tutors are suitably qualified or skilled enough to do their jobs. All staff complete mandatory training in areas such as safeguarding and health and safety. However, tutors do not receive the training they need to improve their teaching. Residential support staff do not receive the training necessary for them to support learners with their education effectively.

Leaders and managers do not ensure that key information about learners is shared swiftly with relevant staff. As a result, it is not used to inform adjustments to the teaching and support of learners. Managers have recently introduced morning handover meetings to inform staff of incidents that have occurred overnight. However, communication between education and care teams remains poor. Consequently, staff and families are not always informed of actions that may have a negative impact on learners' behaviour in college or at home.

FFEC's arrangements to monitor the progress and safety of its learners attending local colleges are weak. FFEC staff do not routinely share learners' EHC plans with these colleges to help the local college staff plan the curriculum and ensure learners' safety.

Leaders have not developed a broad and balanced enough curriculum for developing learners' personal skills. The choice of activities to develop their interests and talents is too narrow. Learners who attend daily do not receive the breadth of opportunities available to residential learners. For example, residential learners are given personalised recipes and often prepare their own meals. Not all learners attending the day programme can routinely practise such independent living skills.

Leaders and managers have not sufficiently ensured mutual respect between staff and learners at the college. For example, although staff have received training in diversity and inclusion, not enough staff model inclusive behaviour or use appropriate language towards learners. Consequently, a minority of learners show a lack of respect for staff and

each other. When learners are disrespectful to their peers, staff do not always take appropriate action. As a result, at times, learners feel uncomfortable and less valued.

The information, advice and guidance on careers that learners receive are not effective. Learners do not benefit from a sufficiently comprehensive programme to develop their skills for work. For example, not all learners meet with the careers staff or have a suitable work placement. Leaders have recently appointed a qualified careers specialist and contracted a local careers provider to give learners impartial advice. However, it is too soon to identify any impact of these developments on learners' knowledge and decision-making.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

Leaders have not ensured that safeguarding is effective throughout the college, or that all learners feel safe. Managers do not consistently follow college safeguarding policies and procedures. Too often they do not respond quickly enough to learners' disclosures or involve relevant external agencies. For example, they do not respond to or act on learners' accusations about their peers swiftly enough. Staff are sometimes too slow to take action when learners report bullying or harassment.

## **What does the provider need to do to improve?**

- Leaders must take urgent action to ensure all learners are safe and feel safe by ensuring that managers and staff adhere closely to FFEC's safeguarding policies and procedures and swiftly respond to any concerns.
- Leaders must establish an ambitious, well-planned, well-taught and coherent curriculum that enables learners to gain the new knowledge, skills and behaviours they need to successfully achieve their goals and move on to their next steps.
- Leaders must ensure that learners receive their entitlement to the educational and therapeutic support specified in their EHC plans.
- Leaders must ensure that learners receive high-quality, impartial careers information, advice and guidance to enable them to make well-informed decisions about their next steps in education, training and work.
- Leaders must ensure that comprehensive quality assurance processes, both at the college and with external providers, are effective.
- Leaders must put in place arrangements that ensure that those responsible for governance hold leaders to account fully for the quality of learners' education and personal development.

## Provider details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	131878
<b>Address</b>	North Parade Frome BA11 2AB
<b>Contact number</b>	01373456470
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.aspriscs.co.uk/">www.aspriscs.co.uk/</a>
<b>Principal/CEO</b>	Nicola Everett
<b>Provider type</b>	Independent specialist college
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	27 to 29 November 2018
<b>Main subcontractors</b>	None

## Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the principal, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-evaluation report and development plan, 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 visiting learning sessions, scrutinising learners' work, seeking the views of learners, staff and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

## Inspection team

Tina Pagett, lead inspector

Esther Williams

Tracey Griffin

Sara Hunter

Her Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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Manchester  
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
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