

Inspection of Calman Colaiste (Kisimul Group)

Inspection dates:

17 to 19 January 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires Improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

Information about this provider

Calman Colaiste is a small independent specialist college providing further education for young adults with autism spectrum disorder, learning difficulties and/or disabilities, complex needs and associated challenging behaviour. Many students are non-verbal and/or have notable communication and language difficulties. The college is part of the Kisimul Group of schools, with residential and supported-living homes. Most of the 21 students are residential; eight are day students who reside in family or care homes external to the college. Around half of the student cohort follow pre-entry level programmes, and the remainder follow entry-level programmes. The college is located on a 28-acre estate.

The leadership team, including those executive team members responsible for governance, was appointed within the past 12 months. A new head of college started in September 2022.

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

Students enjoy attending college. They like the indoor and outdoor experiences available to them, particularly access to the livestock and horticulture facilities. Most students work productively. Students work within a safe, inclusive environment and feel cared for. Students feel safe. Students develop strategies over time that help them to regulate and improve their own behaviour. This means they can work well alongside their peers and participate more fully in lessons. Students benefit from a range of frequent extra-curricular activities, which helps them to keep active and increases their interests and curiosity.

While students access the local community and participate in a small amount of enterprise work, they do not benefit from sufficient exposure to these real-world experiences. Throughout their lessons, students steadily develop an appropriate range of skills, including their literacy and numeracy. Not everything taught by teachers, however, is purposeful or contributes to students' preparation for adulthood.

Over time, most students make notable gains in their confidence and resilience. Students improve their capacity to communicate. This means they are better able to express their wishes, and, in turn, increase their ability to make their own life choices. Students feel safe and well cared for.

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

The curriculum provides an appropriate programme of study for many students, but it is not fully coherent or sufficiently ambitious. While leaders have high expectations for what they want students to achieve, these expectations are not consistently enacted across the college. Leaders and managers have recently taken positive and decisive steps to better focus on topics that will increase students' levels of independence. For example, the curriculum now rightly gives greater prominence to the development of students' communication and language skills.

The planning and quality of teaching varies too much. Teaching is not sufficiently adapted to distinguish between those students following an entry level 1 programme and those on pre-entry level. In a minority of cases, the activities planned by teachers serve no real purpose. Where teachers do carefully select what skills and knowledge students need to learn, and the best way they might learn this, students make effective progress over time.

In animal husbandry, teachers skilfully ensure that students replicate simple routines. For example, students repeatedly revisit the steps involved in feeding the farm animals until they can demonstrate that they have grasped the concept. Students gradually begin to carry out these tasks more independently, or with reduced prompting from staff.

Leaders have recently introduced a weekly reading lesson to the core curriculum. This has increased students' interest effectively in either listening to stories or, where the students are able to do so, reading more books. However, teachers do not structure these lessons coherently to make sure that they are meaningful and/or age-appropriate for students.

Students benefit from a wide range of therapeutic support provided by a very experienced multidisciplinary team. The team is now more integral in planning the curriculum and in designing purposeful resources to improve students' communication. In catering, teachers use visual prompt cards, developed with the therapeutic staff, to help them review whether students have fully understood a task. For example, in a cooking lesson, several students used these prompts themselves to check that they were following the recipe in the correct order.

Teaching and support staff are well qualified. A high number of staff are new to their role or new to teaching. Despite this inexperience, staff use their specialist training appropriately to ensure that students settle quickly in lessons and can concentrate better.

Experienced learning support assistants provide good-quality in-class support. This enables the students to tackle tasks more independently. On occasion, however, intervention by support workers is either passive or domineering, with staff completing much of the work on behalf of the student.

Too few students are learning in the correct order the most meaningful things they need to know to support their future independence. Leaders, managers and teachers are in the process of recalibrating the starting points of students to ensure that they are studying at the correct level. This includes reviewing students' English and mathematics knowledge.

The quality of assessment is not yet consistently good. However, leaders' recent overhaul of the system for tracking students has led to teachers more accurately assessing students' starting points. Teachers frequently review students' progress against their academic and personal targets. Most targets are appropriate. Many students are residential. Teachers do not make good use of the residential setting to enable students to practise their independent living skills.

In 2022, where students started a qualification, all achieved them. Most students make notable gains in their ability to communicate, a key outcome. As a result, students become increasingly able to make their own independent decisions. For example, students can express their preference regarding which adult care provision they want to attend. Students' destinations were broadly in line with the goals outlined in their education, health and care plans.

Staff have high expectations of students' behaviour. Most students are punctual to lessons and attend well. Staff help students to develop effective strategies so that students can take control of their own behaviour. As a result, students can recognise more readily what triggers their anxiety. Many can now successfully self-regulate.

Staff ensure that students gain an appropriate awareness of British values. Consequently, students are respectful towards their peers, staff and visitors. They understand right from wrong, the concept of taking turns, and the importance of being tolerant of others.

Students benefit from a reasonable and growing range of enrichment activities. Much of the enrichment on offer helps students to keep physically and mentally healthy. For example, students access adaptive yoga, nature walks and weekly swimming sessions. Leaders are increasing links within the local community. Most students took part in recent enrichment day visits to an exotic animal sanctuary and a theatre show. Many students participated as part of the Thorney Remembrance Day, making poppy wreaths and then laying these at the epitaph.

Leaders have ensured that students' behaviour has remained a notable strength of the college. Most parents are positive about the work of the college.

Leaders and managers have not ensured that the current staff training programme focuses enough on improving the quality of teaching and assessment practice. Leaders and managers ensure that staff receive a comprehensive range of specialist training. Most staff have a very good understanding of the range of autistic spectrum disorders, safety awareness and how to apply behavioural strategies.

Governance arrangements do not focus sufficiently on the quality of education and training. Executive team members have notably strengthened their oversight of the education curriculum through more rigorous reporting. However, they have not asked enough probing questions of college leaders about how all elements of the curriculum fit together and link to the college's overall vision.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and managers have a sound oversight of safeguarding matters. They have created a positive culture of safeguarding. Given the nature of students' complex learning difficulties and/or disabilities, staff manage risk well. For example, staff ensure that any potentially hazardous activities, such as horse riding, take account of the relevant precautions so that these activities can be accessible to students regardless of their learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Record keeping is thorough. Bullying at the college is very rare. Where any incidents do occur, staff take these seriously and follow up issues swiftly.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Leaders and managers need to ensure that the curriculum is suitably ambitious. They need to make sure that the planned curriculum content fully aligns to what students specifically need to know to successfully prepare them for adulthood.
- Leaders must ensure that teachers can better plan and adapt what they are going to teach, as well as appropriately sequence the order of lessons. In addition, teachers need to better direct support staff so that they can help students to work more independently.
- Leaders and managers should ensure that students can take part in relevant and meaningful enterprise activities, work-related activities or work experience.
- Leaders and managers should fully implement and evaluate their recent actions to strengthen the provision in areas including the reassessment of students' starting points and increasing student access to the community.

Provider details

Unique reference number	144791
Address	Wisbech Road Thorney Peterborough PE6 0TD
Contact number	01733271326
Website	https://www.kisimul.co.uk/service/calman-colaiste-college/
Principal, CEO or equivalent	Mr Michael Hayden
Provider type	Independent Specialist College
Date of previous inspection	27 to 29 March 2019
Main subcontractors	Not applicable

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the head of college, 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 visiting learning sessions, scrutinising learners' work, seeking the views of learners, staff, parents and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

Inspection team

Deborah Vaughan-Jenkins, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Rob Bates	Ofsted Inspector
David Gartland	Ofsted Inspector

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 2023