

Short inspection of The David Lewis Centre

Inspection dates:

1 and 2 March 2023

Outcome

The David Lewis Centre continues to be an outstanding provider.

Information about this provider

The David Lewis Centre (David Lewis College) is an independent, specialist college of further education supporting learners with a wide range of complex needs, including moderate to severe learning difficulties, profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD), and challenging needs. The college is part of David Lewis, a registered charity and company limited by guarantee. Leaders recruit learners from nine local authorities in England and Wales. The college is based on one site in rural Cheshire.

At the time of the inspection, 32 learners aged between 19 and 25 years attended the college. They follow a range of courses from entry level to level 1. Learners study at the college on a residential or day basis.

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

Learners feel that it is a 'dream come true' to study at David Lewis College. They are happy and they think it is an amazing place to learn, with lots of great facilities. Learners appreciate the supportive staff, who help them to develop their confidence and independence.

Learners make significant progress on their programmes. They benefit from high ratios of skilled staff who know them very well. Tutors, therapists and support staff plan and design learning for learners with PMLD and complex needs around their ability to focus and concentrate for shorter periods of time.

Learners benefit from well-considered, individual support strategies linked to their behaviour support plans. Staff use these strategies very effectively to keep learners on task in lessons. They minimise any distractions or disruptions, especially when learners are working as part of a group.

Learners feel very safe at the college. They use a range of college-wide and personalised approaches to expressing any worries or concerns that they have. In

employability lessons, learners learn about safety at work. They successfully recognise and identify the risks in the workplace for a range of different job roles.

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

David Lewis College is an outstanding college. Leaders, managers and governors are extremely ambitious about providing the highest quality of education, so that learners develop their full potential. They have a clear rationale for the challenging curriculum they offer, which is individualised to meet the goals and next steps for each learner. The curriculum provides learners with opportunities to develop a range of skills for independence and communication through which they improve their confidence and self-esteem.

Tutors use the extensive amount of information that they gather to create a personalised approach for each learner in the classroom and for practical learning activities. They design and construct learning activities to meet individual learners' needs and targets. Learners develop new knowledge, skills and behaviours quickly. They make rapid progress towards their planned outcomes. For example, learners working in the college's juice bar each have an individual role in preparing or serving lunches and snacks to staff and learners. They maintain high standards of hygiene while working industriously as part of a wider team.

Learners benefit from excellent therapeutic support from the wide range of therapists and specialist staff. Staff use detailed assessments, reports and recommendations to remove or manage any physical, sensory or health barriers that learners may come across. Therapists and tutors work together to develop holistic targets for learners that enable them to make the best possible progress that they can.

Leaders and managers have developed a clear rationale for the careers strategy at the college. Learners benefit from a range of opportunities to make informed choices about their next steps into adulthood. They attend impartial careers advice and guidance sessions and internal and external work experience. Leaders are currently working on growing the range of external work-placement providers so that more learners can enjoy this aspect of the curriculum.

Parents and carers are proud of the progress that their young person is making at the college. Learners develop their social skills and learn how to regulate their own behaviours. They use the skills they learn at college while at home, such as when making themselves a snack or interacting with others at a social gathering.

Governors provide appropriate challenge to leaders and managers. This includes scrutiny of aspects of the curriculum such as work-experience placements. Leaders provide governors with reports, including on the progress that learners are making on their programmes. Governors hold leaders to account to sustain and further improve the quality of provision for learners.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders, managers and governors place a high priority on keeping learners safe. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and deputies keep the local authorities updated about any safeguarding concerns. They make appropriate referrals to external organisations such as the police and social care. The DSL ensures that staff are kept up to date about relevant local topics, such as child exploitation and mental health.

Provider details

| | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Unique reference number | 131860 |
| Address | Mill Lane Warford Alderley Edge Cheshire SK9 7UD |
| Contact number | 01565 640186 |
| Website | www.davidlewis.org.uk |
| Principal, CEO or equivalent | Angie Fisher |
| Provider type | Independent specialist college |
| Date of previous inspection | 16 to 18 May 2017 |
| Main subcontractors | None |

Information about this inspection

The inspection was the first short inspection carried out since The David Lewis Centre was judged to be outstanding in May 2017.

The inspection team was assisted by the deputy director of education, 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 and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

Inspection team

Alison Cameron Brandwood, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Tracy Gillett

Ofsted Inspector

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