

# Farleigh Further Education College

Reinspection monitoring visit report

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<b>Type of provider:</b>	Independent specialist college
<b>Address:</b>	North Parade Frome Somerset BA11 2AB

## Monitoring visit: main findings

### Context and focus of visit

This is the second reinspection monitoring visit to Farleigh Further Education College following publication of the inspection report on 6 May 2022 which found the provider to be inadequate overall.

Farleigh Further Education College is an independent specialist college owned by Aspris Children's Services. It provides provision for 24 young people with a diagnosis of autism spectrum condition, including pervasive development condition or Asperger syndrome traits. Students often have other complex needs. All students are in receipt of funding for high needs.

### Themes

**What progress have leaders made in ensuring that quality assurance processes, both at the college and for external providers, are effective?**

**Reasonable progress**

Leaders plan and conduct a range of activities throughout the year to assure themselves of the quality of education. They identify accurately the key strengths and areas for improvement in the quality of provision. Leaders have achieved improvements since the previous inspection as a result of specific and targeted actions. For example, leaders undertake scrutiny of students' work and provide tutors with feedback. As a result, most tutors have improved and raised their expectations of students.

Leaders provide staff with useful feedback after their visits to lessons. This identifies clearly the strengths and areas for improvement. For example, a requirement for tutors to link their explanations to students to prior learning more effectively. However, this feedback is shared with tutors in a group setting. They do not receive individual feedback and, therefore, it is not linked well enough to staff's individual reviews and performance.

Leaders have developed a college development plan that identifies accurately the strengths and weaknesses in the quality of provision. This plan is shared with governors at termly meetings and reviewed by leaders and managers in bi-weekly meetings. Leaders produce a suitable improvement action plan, which they review and update frequently.

Leaders have taken the strategic decision to reduce the use of external providers to teach aspects of the curriculum. They are planning to broaden their vocational curriculum in September 2023. Leaders are currently planning training for staff and

ensuring resources are in place. Leaders track and monitor carefully the progress made by students who study at a local college, in addition to studying at the college.

During individual reviews, managers do not focus well enough on staff's areas for development. Managers often set staff targets which are too focused on process, rather than improving the quality of education. Too often targets are generic, lack the detail of what actions need to be taken and/or how and when they will be reviewed.

**What progress have leaders made in developing an ambitious, well-planned and well-taught curriculum, which provides learners with specialist careers information, advice and guidance and therapeutic support? Reasonable progress**

Students study a curriculum that enables them to develop appropriate skills and knowledge and achieve relevant qualifications. For example, in addition to studying the main qualification, students develop knowledge of topics, such as awareness of disabilities, LGBTQ+ and how to live independently.

Staff now undertake a comprehensive assessment of all students starting points. This includes taking into account information from previous providers, education and health care plans, discussions with students and an assessment of their practical skills. The majority of staff use this evidence well to plan a curriculum that supports students to achieve the best possible outcomes.

Students access appropriate support and guidance from trained staff when planning their careers or their next steps in education or independence. Staff have begun assessing the college service against the Gatsby benchmarks to help to ensure that students receive the best possible support. As a result, students understand their options, such as progressing on to an apprenticeships or higher education. They can articulate clearly why they have chosen a particular educational path. Students are supported well by staff when applying for jobs.

Leaders' awareness of the skills of teachers is accurate. They support the tutors who do not consistently perform well to improve rapidly. Staff take part in appropriate professional development. This includes topics such as teaching strategies, personal development and safeguarding. However, staff do not ensure that their subject expertise and knowledge is kept up to date by taking part in activities, such as participating in professional networks.

Leaders meet regularly with staff and hold them to account for the progress made by their students. Leaders work effectively with teaching staff to ensure that all students meet at least their minimum expected grades by the end of the academic year.

Leaders are still trying to ensure that students, who require specialist therapy to access fully the curriculum, receive their entitlement. Leaders receive some support from staff at a nearby school. However, vacancies for therapy staff remain.

**What progress have leaders made in putting prompt actions in place to ensure that all students are safe and feel safe?**

**Reasonable progress**

Leaders have appointed additional staff into the safeguarding team to provide students with more support. They have introduced a range of methods to enable students to raise concerns. For example, a new email address, a mailbox located in reception and access to the safeguarding team. Students feel confident talking to staff at the college about safeguarding or well-being issues.

Leaders have developed an innovative training programme for staff. This includes the weekly teaching of topics, such as harmful sexual behaviour, prevention of exploitation and/or radicalisation, how to access and give help early to students, mental health and domestic violence. Staff very much appreciate this training and put their learning into practice with their students.

Leaders ensure that staff work together on safeguarding issues, so that all decisions are discussed and accurately recorded. The safeguarding team meet fortnightly to discuss and review student cases and agree on remedial actions.

The designated safeguarding lead refers student cases appropriately to the LADO (local authority designated officer) and the local Channel and Prevent Multiagency Panel. Student allegations against staff are investigated and actions agreed by the LADO and the leaders at Aspris.

Staff know their students well and use this information to support them in the self-regulation of their behaviours. This helps students to complete their work and make progress in achieving their long-term goals. Staff challenge inappropriate student behaviour in a way that supports them to identify the behaviour and gives them the time to make the necessary adjustments.

The majority of classrooms are too hot, which makes a few students feel unwell. Classrooms are too busy for students who struggle with cognitive overload. For example, walls are full of colourful posters. Leaders are aware of the impact of this on learners and have remedial plans in place.

**What progress have leaders made in ensuring the arrangements for those responsible for governance to hold leaders to account are effective?**

**Reasonable progress**

Leaders have ensured that governance arrangements are robust and working well. Leaders meet with governors bi-weekly to ensure that the college continues to improve the quality of the provision. This helps governors to understand the progress that leaders are making in addressing the weaknesses identified in the college improvement plan. Governors provide leaders with appropriate levels of support and challenge.

Governors have expertise and knowledge in post-16 education and special educational needs and/or disabilities. They use this knowledge well to question senior leaders about the impact of improvement actions taken. Governors challenge senior leaders effectively. For example, governors meet senior leaders each term and provide them with appropriate challenge on targets that are not achieved in the agreed timescales.

Leaders provide governors with useful information on topics, such as low student attendance, identification of safeguarding problems and the estate and use of resources.

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