

Inspection of Farleigh Further Education College - Frome

Inspection dates: 10 to 12 May 2023

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Inadequate

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Inadequate

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Provision for learners with high needs

Inadequate

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Inadequate

Information about this provider

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 disorder, including pervasive developmental disorder or Asperger syndrome traits. Students often have other complex needs. All students are in receipt of funding for high needs.

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

Learners develop positive attitudes and behaviours. Staff create a calm and positive culture at the college because they know and care about their learners.

Learners behave well in class. They are supported by staff to develop self-regulation strategies to manage their own behaviours.

Learners develop their confidence and resilience. They become more confident when communicating with others and accessing the local community.

Learners' attendance remains too low. Leaders and staff monitor closely any non-attenders to ensure they are safe. However, they do not support learners to catch up on any learning they miss while absent.

Learners feel safe and know who to report their concerns to. In a small minority of cases, learners do not feel that staff and leaders take their reports relating to bullying, harassment or discrimination seriously enough. In these instances, learners have very little confidence in reporting such issues.

Most learners do not benefit from enrichment opportunities to develop their physical health and well-being.

Learners are not clear on their next steps. They do not receive careers information, advice and guidance to help them make decisions about what they want to do after college.

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

Leaders have not ensured that the curriculum that learners follow prepares them to be successful at work and in adult life. The curriculum does not reflect the individual needs of learners well enough. For example, some learners follow qualifications unrelated to their next steps because they are limited by what the college offers.

Teachers do not plan the curriculum content well enough so that it takes account of what learners already know and can do. Too often, teachers rely on qualifications to provide the curriculum content. For example, in health and social care, learners complete written assignments rather than learning new content and gaining knowledge and skills that they need for their future career goals. Teachers do not give sufficient thought to the order of teaching so that learners can learn more and remember and use new knowledge.

Leaders do not have sufficient oversight of the therapy services learners receive. Leaders and managers have not swiftly addressed gaps in the therapies they can provide. The recruitment of specialist therapy staff has been too slow. Too few

learners receive the therapies they need as detailed in their education, health and care (EHC) plans.

Leaders have not ensured that there is effective oversight of the skills and knowledge that learners gain on work placements. Staff do not set clear learning objectives for learners so that they know what they have learned and what they need to learn next. As a result, the progress learners make towards developing work-appropriate skills and behaviours is too slow.

Leaders do not ensure that learners develop their physical health and well-being through the curriculum. In instances where physical activity is a requirement of the EHC plan, staff support learners to join and access the gym. However, most learners do not benefit from opportunities to develop their physical well-being.

Too few learners are receiving suitable relationship and sex education to help them develop an understanding of what constitutes a healthy relationship. In a very small minority of instances, learners report that the information they have received is not at an appropriate level - for example, for learners who are already in a relationship.

Leaders and staff do not support learners well enough to identify and prepare for their next steps. Careers information, advice and guidance provided to learners is minimal. In too many instances, learners are not clear about what their next steps will be after they finish college.

Leaders have recently introduced quality assurance processes to help them gain an insight into the quality of education that learners receive. This has led to some whole-college training initiatives, such as training on pedagogical practices for learners with autism spectrum disorder. However, quality monitoring processes do not yet give leaders the assurance and information they need to check the impact of improvement initiatives on the quality of education that learners receive.

Leaders and governors do not have strategic oversight of the progress that learners are making. There is an over-reliance on the completion of qualification assessment rather than the development of substantial new knowledge, skills and behaviours. Leaders do not track learners to ensure that those at risk of falling behind receive the support they need to succeed.

Leaders do not have sufficient strategic oversight of subcontracted provision. Arrangements for information sharing with subcontractors are informal and do not occur frequently enough to ensure that the provision is high quality. Leaders do not know if subcontractors continue to meet the needs of the learners who access it. For example, for learners studying animal care and customer service, leaders have not identified that these learners do not receive sufficient teaching in order to learn substantial new knowledge and skills.

Governors rightly recognise that, since the previous full inspection, their focus has been on developing a culture of safeguarding at the college and restructuring staffing to ensure the financial viability of the college. Governors and leaders meet

frequently. However, these meetings lack focus and challenge to improve the quality of education and personal development to drive better outcomes for learners.

Since the previous inspection, college leaders have taken steps to communicate more frequently with staff. As a result, most staff feel better supported and able to voice their views. However, a minority of staff do not feel that executive leaders listen and act on the feedback they give to drive workforce improvements.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have taken appropriate actions to ensure learner safety. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and deputy DSLs are suitably trained and experienced to carry out their role. Appropriate policies and procedures are in place for the safe onboarding of staff. Staff undertake regular update training. Leaders track and monitor safeguarding referrals appropriately, through to resolution.

Leaders do not have a clear understanding of local and regional contextual risks to be able to educate learners of the risks in the areas in which they live, study and work.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- 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.
- Ensure that learners receive their entitlement to the educational and therapeutic support specified in their EHC plans.
- Ensure learners are prepared for life in modern Britain, including the local and regional risks in the areas in which they live, work and study.
- Ensure learners develop an appropriate understanding of healthy relationships for work and in their personal lives.
- 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.
- Ensure that comprehensive quality assurance processes, both at the college and with subcontractors, are effective.
- 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

Unique reference number	131878
Address	North Parade Frome BA11 2AB
Contact number	01373456470
Website	https://www.aspriscs.co.uk/find-a-location/farleigh-further-education-college-frome/
Principal, CEO or equivalent	Justin Davey
Provider type	Independent Specialist College
Date of previous inspection	15 to 23 February 2022
Main subcontractors	Hadden Training and Strode College

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the executive headteacher, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's 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

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