

Inspection of Condover College Limited

Inspection dates:

6 to 8 February 2024

Overall effectiveness**Outstanding**

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Provision for learners with high needs

Outstanding

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

Information about this provider

Condover College is an independent specialist college located near Shrewsbury, Shropshire. Students have a wide range of complex needs, including moderate to severe learning difficulties, profound and multiple learning difficulties, and sensory impairments. The college is part of the larger Condover College Ltd organisation that provides a range of services and support to people with learning difficulties and disabilities. Leaders recruit most students from the West Midlands region and Wales.

At the time of the inspection, 20 students aged between 19 and 25 years attended the college, 14 of whom were in scope for the inspection. Six students funded by the Welsh government were not in scope. Students follow either a design for living or an employability pathway. Most students travel to the college to study and a few are residential.

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

Students flourish in the respectful, open and supportive culture that extends throughout the college. Students significantly improve their confidence, resilience and communication skills. They introduce themselves to visitors using their own preferred communication styles. Students have high attendance and arrive at lessons on time.

Students reflect the high expectations set by leaders at the college. They have very positive attitudes to their learning and are highly motivated to do their best. Students take immense pride in their achievements. They create sensory interaction scrap books that document the activities they complete and the skills that they learn. Students revisit their booklets frequently to recap and recall their learning.

Students benefit greatly from the comprehensive information, advice and guidance they receive when they are transitioning into and out of college. Staff use students' long-term goals to build a learning programme that closely matches their ambitions. When they leave the college, students continue to apply what they have learned, such as making choices and using their independent living skills. Students have high aspirations for their next steps such as paid employment, volunteering and supported living.

Students feel safe at the college. They take part in personal safety lessons where they learn how to recognise 'safe strangers' such as police officers. Students frequently revisit topics such as the dangers of personal information sharing. They take part in travel training, including by train.

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

Leadership and management are exceptional. Leaders, managers and those responsible for governance are extremely aspirational for their students. They have implemented an ambitious curriculum that challenges students to achieve the best that they can. Through meticulous planning, high levels of appropriate support, and the use of integrated therapies, students make excellent progress from their starting points.

Leaders and managers use high needs funding very effectively so that students achieve challenging academic and personal targets. They have developed a culture in which integrated support and therapies are embedded into the curriculum. Therapists collaborate with colleagues to design individualised programmes for students. Leaders invest significantly in specialised equipment so that students can participate fully in their programme. Students who use moulded wheelchairs transfer to a specialised mobility bed in lessons so that they can interact with their peers at the same height. They develop independence, social skills and balance while maintaining a comfortable and functional position.

Staff are very suitably skilled and knowledgeable to work with students with complex and profound needs. They benefit from specialist training, including tactile signing, alternative and augmentative communication and epilepsy training. Staff use the skills that they develop to ensure that students make extensive progress in lessons. For example, working closely with speech and language therapists and physiotherapists, staff develop a high-level understanding of communication techniques. Students develop the skills that they need to ask for specific staff to help with their personal care.

Teachers plan learning extremely effectively. They implement very well thought out and highly individualised sessions. Teachers embed a wide range of sensory activities that are age appropriate and based on individual needs, interest, and preferences. They teach at an appropriate yet challenging pace, which means that students remain interested, actively engaged and enthusiastic. Teachers skilfully spark students' interests without overstimulating them. Students learn how to work with their classmates using assistive technology, interactive storytelling, and musical instruments.

Support for students is excellent. Learning support assistants (LSAs) expertly reinforce learning and ensure that students are working on their individual goals. They are proficient in numerous communication techniques. LSAs challenge students sensitively to do more to express their preferences. Students extend their vocabulary and become adept in making personal choices.

Students take part in an extensive range of personal development activities that develop their character. They conduct accessibility audits at local businesses so that employers can use their findings to make their premises more accessible. Students are respectful of each other's roles while carrying out the audit. They are proud of the part that they play in raising awareness about disabilities. Students on the employability pathway learn kitchen and gardening skills when they attend work placements in cafés and garden centres.

Staff work very closely with students' families and carers to ensure that students continue to reinforce their learning at home. Parents are immensely pleased with the social, personal and domestic skills that students have developed. Students follow instructions for tasks such as helping to make meals or load the dishwasher. Parents are delighted about the increased levels of confidence and self-esteem that students demonstrate. They feel that the college has raised their own aspirations for what their young person can achieve in life.

Leaders have in place rigorous and thorough quality assurance systems and processes that ensure that improvements in the quality of education are continuous. They use a wide range of evidence, including external peer group teaching and learning visit outcomes to identify what staff do well and what they need to do to improve. They put in place training for staff, following which they revisit sessions to check the improvements have been made.

Members of the education committee, who are responsible for governance, know the college very well. They are passionate about ensuring that students achieve their full potential. The director of education shares detailed reports with committee members who hold leaders and managers to account. Committee members provide high levels of scrutiny and challenge for the quality of education at the college. They question leaders in detail about the progress students are making, including the voracity of the targets being set.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Provider details

Unique reference number	131857
Address	Grafton Centre Grafton Montford Bridge Shrewsbury Shropshire SY4 1HF
Contact number	01743 872250
Website	condovercollege.co.uk
Principal and Director of education	Tracy Gillett
Provider type	Independent specialist college
Date of previous inspection	22 November 2017
Main subcontractors	None

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the 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
Steve Kelly	His Majesty's Inspector
Maria Navarro	His Majesty's Inspector

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