

Pinc College

Monitoring visit report

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Name of lead inspector:	Suzanne Wainwright, His Majesty's Inspector
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Type of provider:	Independent specialist college
Address:	Manchester Museum Oxford Road Manchester M13 9PL

Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

Ofsted undertakes to carry out monitoring visits to independent specialist colleges newly funded by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). This monitoring visit was undertaken as part of those arrangements and as outlined in the 'Further education and skills inspection handbook', especially the sections entitled 'Monitoring visits' and 'Monitoring visits to providers that are newly directly publicly funded'. The focus of these visits is on the themes set out below.

Pinc College was founded originally in 2017 as an alternative provision for students with neurodivergent conditions who struggled at school. In September 2022, the college gained its own funding as an independent specialist college. Students follow art and digital art curriculums that include A levels, GCSEs and/or functional skills qualifications, the development of personal and social skills, and skills for work. Pinc College provides vulnerable students with unique environments in which to learn. All learning is hosted in museums and other arts and cultural heritage sites across the north west, the West Midlands and Yorkshire, with one site located in Cardiff.

At the time of the monitoring visit, there were 190 students based across 13 sites. Most students were aged between 16 and 25 years and had autism spectrum disorder and/or required support for social, emotional and/or mental health needs. All students had an education, health and care (EHC) plan.

Themes

How much progress have leaders and managers made in designing and delivering relevant learning programmes that are clearly defined and tailored to suit the individual needs of learners? Significant progress

Leaders and managers have designed high-quality, student-focused and ambitious curriculums. They use the uniqueness of their learning environments very effectively to engage vulnerable students in learning. Most students did not previously attend school or other education providers regularly.

Leaders have created very strong partnerships with relevant stakeholders that help them to provide regular opportunities such as work experience and art-related industry visits. These activities help students to understand what careers are available to them when they leave the college. Students take part in real-life artistic events. For example, students in the West Midlands recently organised a high-profile exhibition of their artwork at Aston Hall in Birmingham. Each student had a role in the exhibition, such as curator, illustrator or official photographer. Students are proud of their work, which is of a very high standard.

Leaders use high-needs funding very effectively. They have created clear systems and processes, such as for student enrolment and learning support, which they use consistently across all campuses to support learning. Consequently, students, regardless of where they study, make good, and often exceptional, progress.

Leaders have implemented appropriate quality assurance and quality improvement processes. They review the curriculums regularly to ensure that they meet individual student's needs. Leaders have identified accurately the strengths and weaknesses of their provision. Leaders recognise that further work is needed to ensure that their self-assessment report is sufficiently evaluative.

Staff are highly qualified and experienced in working with vulnerable students. They benefit from regular training and development activities. For example, tutors and support staff receive specific training on topics such as mental health and autism, as well as general updates on how to improve their teaching practices.

Governors have the right skills and expertise to oversee this unique and specialist provision. They hold leaders fully to account to ensure that the provision is of a high quality and supports students' needs.

How much progress have leaders and managers made to ensure that learners benefit from high-quality learning programmes that develop independence, communication and skills and help them to achieve their personal and/or work-related goals? **Significant progress**

Leaders have developed an in-depth transition process into the college. Staff use the information they gain exceptionally well to plan individualised programmes to meet students' needs and EHC plan outcomes. This helps students to overcome their significant barriers to learning. Tutors carry out assessments of students' English and mathematical skills sensitively, often using sensory games. This approach encourages students who previously found these subjects challenging to participate and to succeed. In many instances, students say that their attendance at the college has been life changing.

Tutors have high expectations of what students can achieve. They use questioning techniques skilfully and sensitively to challenge students' understanding and to deepen their knowledge further. Students improve their confidence and self-esteem quickly. They feel supported and aspire to go to university or progress on to further learning or employment.

Tutors deploy learning support staff effectively in lessons to assist students who require additional help or encouragement. This ensures that students complete their work on time and participate fully in lessons and learning activities. Students benefit

from specialist tutors such as speech and communication leads to support their additional needs.

Students benefit from an effective and respectful community approach to learning. Teachers, support staff and staff in the heritage centres work together effectively to support students. They act as role models. All staff support students to manage their behaviour and emotions when in crisis and to develop effective self-regulation strategies. Students demonstrate high levels of respect for one another. They help one another willingly and are supportive of individual differences.

Staff provide students with a written record of 'daily positives' that demonstrate to students what they have achieved. These are examples of learning activities or situations that have gone particularly well for a student and demonstrate clearly how far students have progressed. Most tutors provide students with detailed and helpful verbal and written feedback on their work.

How much progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that effective safeguarding arrangements are in place? Reasonable progress

All staff, including heritage staff, have created a positive approach to safeguarding across the whole organisation. Staff implement effective procedures to safeguard their students in public places.

Students feel safe and know who to turn to if they have a concern. However, not all students can remember what they have learned around the risks of radicalisation and extremism. Although training is planned, most students have yet to receive formal learning relating to healthy relationships, sexual harassment and consent.

All staff and governors receive appropriate training in safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty. Campus leads and other managers receive designated safeguarding lead training. Staff record referrals and disclosures in detail and ensure that they follow up concerns with appropriate external agencies wherever necessary.

Leaders carry out appropriate checks on new staff.

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