

WiEducate Limited

Monitoring visit report

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Name of lead inspector: Georgina Ager, His Majesty's Inspector

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Type of provider: Independent specialist college

Address: 8 Cheyne Walk
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Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

Ofsted undertakes to carry out monitoring visits to independent specialist colleges newly funded by the Department for Education. 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.

WiEducate Limited is an independent specialist college based in Northampton. It offers a range of study programmes to young people aged 16 to 25 with high needs and education, health and care plans. They specialise in providing courses for young people who have social, emotional and mental health needs.

At the time of the visit, there were 35 students with high needs. Fewer than five students undertake supported internships. Ten students study an outreach programme with one-to-one sessions. The remaining students study the inspire and empower programmes, where they receive small group and one-to-one teaching at one of two centres in Northampton. Students come from across West and North Northamptonshire.

Leaders work with one subcontractor, In Music In Media Limited, to offer music and media courses for a small number of students. At the time of the visit, students had not yet started these courses.

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? Reasonable progress

Leaders offer flexible and tailored programmes for young people, based around their individual needs. They work with students who are furthest away from education and hard to place in other post-16 settings. There is considerable need in the local area for this type of specialist provision.

Leaders work flexibly with students and parents to plan courses. Transition into the provision is thorough. Before students start their courses, leaders meet with young people and their parents/carers in their homes to fully understand student's needs and goals. Where needed, staff ensure that students receive supportive outreach sessions to build trust and confidence. This helps students settle on their courses and work positively and constructively with staff.

Staff adapt their approaches well to meet the specific needs of each young person. In the first instance, this is often based around helping students to develop strategies to self-regulate, manage their emotions and build confidence in social situations. Once students become more confident, they study vocational learning/pathways and qualifications. Leaders design ambitious programmes. A few students study higher-level qualifications in mathematics and biology.

Leaders have recently introduced new systems to track students' progress. It is too early to judge the impact of leaders' oversight.

Leaders have recently established a formal governance board. Leaders have ensured that governors have the right educational background to be able to support and challenge them. However, governors do not sufficiently scrutinise or challenge the quality of the curriculum.

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? Reasonable progress

Leaders and staff work effectively with students to overcome barriers and prepare for adulthood and work. Tutors use interventions successfully to support students to re-engage with education. Staff use creative strategies to personalise sessions and link tasks to student's own interests. Staff plan enjoyable activities, such as cooking and volunteering. These courses better prepare students for adult life and employment.

Youth mentors and job coaches work sensitively with students to support them to achieve their individual goals. They set activities such as travel training or individualised tasks to develop students' confidence. Students become more independent over time. Those students who previously avoided school thrive and are able to attend the training centres and contribute to group sessions.

Tutors set challenging targets based on students' starting points and education, health and care plan outcomes. Targets are closely linked to students' aspirations, such as employment or further study. Staff skilfully break targets down into small, achievable steps. Previously, the assessment, monitoring and recording of students' progress was not consistently of a good standard. This has now improved, and staff frequently monitor students' progress in meeting their goals.

Tutors skilfully embed English and mathematics into everyday learning, such as converting fractions into percentages during lessons. This helps students to apply English and mathematics in real world contexts. Students improve their English and

mathematics skills. Where appropriate, students achieve their first qualifications and quickly move to higher levels. Students are proud of these successes.

Leaders and managers ensure that students are capably supported to think about and explore their next steps. Leaders have built strong links with employers. This ensures that many students and supported interns receive meaningful workplace experiences and taster opportunities. The few students who have so far left their courses have moved on to positive destinations, such as paid employment or further study at local further education providers.

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

Leaders prioritise the safeguarding of the young people who attend their provision. Leaders know their students and the challenges they present very well. They take swift action to respond to any safeguarding concerns.

As the provider has grown, leaders have ensured that they have sufficient trained staff to meet the increasing safeguarding needs of students. Safeguarding leads have a good understanding of the local safeguarding risks.

Students feel very safe when they attend both sites. They know how to report any concerns. Students' knowledge of online safety, consent, healthy relationships and the risks of radicalisation is excellent.

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