



# Beaumont College



ADULT LEARNING  
INSPECTORATE

Better  
education  
and care

## Inspection report

Audience  
Post-sixteen

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50000

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## Basic information about the college

Name of college:	Beaumont College
Type of college:	Independent, residential, specialist
Acting Principal:	Graeme Pyle
Address of college:	Slyne Road, Lancaster LA2 6AP
Telephone number:	01524 541 400
Fax number:	01524 846 896
Chair of governors:	Kerstin Jarman
Unique reference number:	50000
Name of reporting inspector:	Susan Preece HMI
Dates of inspection:	4 – 7 October 2005

## Background of the organisation

1. Beaumont College, which is run by Scope, was founded in 1977 and is located on the northern edge of the city of Lancaster. Beaumont offers both residential and non-residential programmes for young people with cerebral palsy and associated disabilities, all of whom are between the ages of 16-25 years. In recent years, the college has attracted an increasing number of learners with complex needs. There are a total of 78 learners, most of whom are aged 19 or over, with an equal number of male and females attending the college. The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) funds 74 learners, a further three are funded by Scottish Local Authorities and one is funded by ELWA. Five learners are from minority ethnic backgrounds. There are 22 learners attending on a day basis; this represents a significant increase over the past three years. Residential learners come mainly from the northern and midlands regions of England.
2. The main teaching and residential accommodation is located on one site. The curriculum framework offers learners one of three programmes: the certificate in communication and supported living; the certificate in independent living and personal development; and the certificate in vocational studies. Within each certificate the study areas of creative arts, skills for life and personal development are taught. Personal development is mainly offered through the extended curriculum.
3. The principal has recently taken early retirement and from September 2005 the vice principal was appointed as acting principal and a new senior management team was established. The college is facing challenges as a consequence of undertaking required improvements to the building to meet national minimum care standards and the Special Educational Needs Disability Act (SENDA) 2001.
4. The college aims to empower learners to take increasing responsibility for their own lives and make things happen for themselves, either independently or by working with and directing others. Beaumont College aims 'to give its students confidence in living as independent young adults; help to acquire the skills they need to determine their own lifestyles; meaningful preparation for the next phase of their lives as young adults; support in achieving an appropriate post-college destination; and provide services which are in line with Scope's mission'.

## Scope of the inspection

5. In deciding the scope of this inspection, inspectors took account of: the college's previous inspection report ([www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)); the college's most recent self-assessment report and development plans; comments from the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC); reports from the inspectorate annual assessment visits; and data on enrolments and learners' achievements over the period since the last inspection. This inspection focused on the following aspects:

- overall effectiveness of the college and its capacity to improve further
- achievements and standards
- quality of provision
- leadership and management
- specialist provision in social and life skills and pre-vocational skills.

## Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision	Satisfactory: grade 3
Capacity to improve	Inadequate: grade 4
Achievements and standards	Good: grade 2
Quality of provision	Satisfactory: grade 3
Leadership and management	Inadequate: grade 4

*Note: Where contributory grades have been awarded, they are shown in the relevant sections of the report. Contributory grades represent the judgement of the team that the quality of the aspect of provision indicated by the grade differs from the grade overall.*

## Curriculum areas

Curriculum area	Social and Life Skills	Satisfactory: grade 3
Curriculum area	Pre-vocational Skills	Good: grade 2

## Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Satisfactory: grade 3

6. Learners' achievements are good. Success rates in a range of national awards are good. All learners make significant gains in confidence, communication skills, and adopting appropriate behaviour. There are no differences between the achievements of different age groups. The recording of individual's learning and progress needs to be improved.
7. Teaching is satisfactory and some is good or better. Teachers make effective use of creative arts. They use innovative approaches to develop and extend learners' skills. In a minority of lessons the activities don't match the learner's needs. Assessment is insufficiently rigorous.
8. The college's approach to educational and social inclusion is satisfactory. There are successful links with the local community and a good range of enrichment activities are available. Comprehensive procedures are well established to promote the safety, well being and progress of individual learners. The college is not compliant with Special Educational Needs Disability Act 2001 (SENDA). The development of basic skills is satisfactory.
9. Guidance and support for learners is outstanding. Specialist facilities for assistive and augmentative communication (AAC) are outstanding. The specialist multi-disciplinary teams make a significant contribution to ensuring learners are able to communicate more effectively and to access the curriculum. Learners are well prepared for transition.
10. Leadership and management are inadequate. Scope has not made adequate progress in addressing significant weaknesses identified at the previous inspection. The accommodation continues to be unfit for purpose. Curriculum planning is satisfactory. Self-assessment and quality assurance processes are satisfactory but financial planning, strategic planning and governance remain weak.

Capacity to improve

Inadequate: grade 4

11. The college demonstrates inadequate capacity to improve the environment for learners. The new arrangements for quality assurance are already showing signs of improving the provision. However, improvements to the environment have been slow and accommodation continues to be inadequate. Governance is ineffective. Scope's record in addressing weaknesses is poor. The college does not have performance indicators that enable provision to be evaluated year on year. Inspectors found the self-assessment arrangements to be satisfactory. In the self-assessment report for 2004-2005, many of the organisational strengths and weaknesses were identified, although in skills for life provision, strengths



were overestimated. The action plan to address these weaknesses has yet to be written.

The effectiveness of the steps taken by the college to promote improvement since the last inspection

12. The college has made inadequate progress in addressing areas for organisational improvement highlighted during the last inspection. Scope convened the inaugural meeting of a new governing body the night before this inspection after a long period without effective governance. Improvements to the environment have accelerated recently but accommodation continues to be inadequate. Strategic planning continues to be a weakness. The recent plan for the future of the college is not costed. Scope has made few improvements to the systems for effective financial planning.

Key strengths of the college

#### *Strengths*

- good achievements for all learners
- good development of communication skills
- outstanding links with external arts community
- very good multi disciplinary support
- good staff training and development
- clear and supportive leadership from the new college management team

Areas for improvement

#### *The college should address:*

- the assessment and recording of learners' progress
- the slow response by Scope to rectify significant weaknesses identified in the last inspection report
- the poor standard of teaching and residential accommodation
- compliance with SENDA and Race Relations Amendment Act (RR(A)A)
- governance and strategic planning
- financial management

## Main findings

### Achievements and standards

Good: grade 2

13. Learners' achievements are good and the quality of work across the curriculum is generally high, especially in creative arts. Where appropriate, learners have their achievements well recognised through a range of national awards. Pass rates on these programmes are very good. The majority of learners make at least the progress expected of them during their time at college and many exceed initial expectations. However, these achievements gained over time are not sufficiently clearly documented.
14. Learners' enjoy their work. Their confidence increases significantly with parallel development in communication, self esteem and personal skills. Young people with severe and challenging behaviour are successfully enabled to participate in a range of activities and succeed in a variety of contexts where they had failed in the past. One young woman now stays in class for progressively longer periods of time whereas on arrival at college her behaviour prevented her from participating in group situations.
15. There are no differences between the achievements of different groups of learners. Baseline assessments are insufficiently comprehensive and records of learners' progress do not fully capture incremental learning and summative progress. These weaknesses are recognised in the self assessment report.
16. All learners are encouraged to 'find a voice' and use it to make a difference. Realistic opportunities are created which enable learners to respond effectively in social situations and to successfully acquire skills which contribute to their emotional and social wellbeing. Learners who arrive at college with very limited communication skills successfully learn to use communication approaches appropriate to their individual need. For example, a young man with a progressively deteriorating medical condition is now able to engage with and respond to those around him through the use of a head switch. This device triggers a recording of his own voice, thus enabling him to contribute to social situations and express preferences by indicating 'yes' or 'no'. Another student with no speech but good functional comprehension is becoming increasingly expressive. He is now able to make up sentences and phrases using his voice output communication aid.
17. Rates of retention and attendance are very good. Issues of poor punctuality are not well addressed and this weakness was not identified in the self assessment.

## Quality of provision

Satisfactory: grade 3

18. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and some teaching is good or better. The college overestimated the quality of its teaching and learning in the self assessment report but does accurately acknowledge weaknesses in assessment and recording processes. Inspectors agreed that staff have high expectations for learners and this is supported by annual review reports and parental questionnaires. Most teaching and learning support staff are well qualified, skilled and experienced. The majority of staff work confidently and use their expertise well to enable learners to communicate and learn effectively. The college's judgement that students enjoy their learning and benefit from a range of teaching methods was very apparent in both curriculum areas inspected.
19. In the more successful lessons teachers planned practical multi-sensory activities to enliven their teaching. For example, in a lesson with learners with profound and complex needs, the use of a parachute, a wind machine, movement, touch and olfactory senses were effective in developing learners' response and communication skills. In a dance lesson, music and touch were used successfully to enable a learner to experience a new movement as a form of communication. Intensive interaction and music are used effectively to motivate learners and to reduce anxiety so that they can increasingly relate to others around them. The use and innovative development of specialist resources is good. A total communication system has been individually designed by college staff for a student to enable her to have much greater control over her surroundings and increase her independence.
20. In less successful lessons there is an overemphasis on paper based resources which are not always suitable for the learners involved. Pre-entry assessment is comprehensive but is not used sufficiently to establish clear baselines upon which distance travelled can be effectively identified. Termly and annual reviews of progress effectively identify learners progress in relation to the milestones of the national pre-entry Skills for Life curriculum but these reports do not record all the learning. Both internal and external verification processes are well developed. The self assessment report accurately identifies strengths in the the college's procedures to promote the health and safety of individual learners.
21. The college's approach to social and educational inclusion is satisfactory but Beaumont is not compliant with recent equalities legislation. The college responds adequately to meeting the needs and interests of learners and has had particular success in supporting students with severe communication difficulties. Learners are helped to steadily increase their involvement in both educational activities, decisions about their daily lives and to better understand their rights and responsibilities.
22. The lack of a student forum restricts the opportunity for the learners to have a corporate voice. However, the Beaumont monthly newsletter provides an

effective forum for a few learners to voice their opinions and celebrate successes. To further enrich the lives of learners a person centred planning process successfully assists the young people to explore what they want now and in the future. Improved contact with the local community provides real opportunities for learning. Attempts have been made to address the issues of fairness and diversity raised in the last inspection but the college acknowledges that this is in need of further development.

23. Opportunities for learners to participate in external work placements have significantly improved since the last inspection. The recent appointment of a community link co-ordinator and a comprehensive planned approach to increase community presence through the personal development programme is helping to further develop this area. A good range of enrichment activities and sport contribute to learners' enjoyment. Learners are making a positive contribution to the local community and increasing the understanding of issues around disability.
24. Support and guidance are outstanding. Specialist facilities for assistive and augmentative communication (AAC) are outstanding. The specialist multi-disciplinary teams make a significant contribution to learners' ability to communicate more effectively, to develop emotional and physical good health and well being, and to access the curriculum. The induction programme is good, although the student handbook is not sufficiently accessible. Key workers and educational tutors provide very effective individual support for learners. Support for learners in classes is very good. Learners are prepared well for transition, with significant levels of contact with local transition teams and Connexions. Communication with parents and carers is good.

#### Leadership and management

Inadequate: grade 4

25. Leadership and management are inadequate. Scope has been very slow to address significant weaknesses identified at the previous inspection. Uncertainty about whether or not the charity would continue to fund the college has made strategic planning very difficult. The charity has recently indicated that it will continue with the service, but the development planning associated with that is still in the early stages, and not clearly costed. The college has its own development plan for 2005 -2008, but this is not costed. The college does not have a business plan, neither does it have whole college performance indicators against which to measure progress year on year. Planning in relation to the curriculum is satisfactory, and the college has recently developed an operational plan for senior managers. The quality assurance framework is new but there are early signs of it being effective in bringing about improvements for learners. The self-assessment process is comprehensive and largely accurate but does not identify all areas for improvement that were found by inspectors. Arrangements by Scope for governance of the college continue to be inadequate. The first meeting of a new governing body was held the night before the inspection.

26. The senior management team has provided very good support to the staff throughout a difficult time. The recent change of principal has been managed very effectively. Staff feel well supported and are effectively managed. Staff are well qualified. Staff training and development are very good. Staff are well prepared for working with a cohort of learners whose needs are becoming increasingly complex. The college has effective links with other educational establishments, including higher education and is beginning to play a role in the training and development of the workforce locally. The college has built up significant expertise in enabling learners to 'find a voice' and to learn to use alternative and augmentative communication aids effectively. Its use of the creative arts as a medium for the development of communication skills and growth in self-confidence continues to be a significant strength. Arrangements for safeguarding are good. Learners have good access to advocacy and complaints systems.
27. The college is not compliant with the requirements of the RR(A)A or of the SENDA. The first meeting of the equality and fairness committee has recently met to address these issues. Within the creative arts opportunities are sometimes taken to promote equalities themes. Scope has agreed improvements to the standard of accommodation since the previous inspection, with a significant acceleration of activity recently. However, the learning environment is still not adequate. Neither the residential nor the teaching accommodation is satisfactory. The residential facilities do not meet the requirements of the Commission for Social Care Inspectorate (CSCI) or the SENDA. Although the specialist facilities for learners are very good, and there has been significant investment in information and communication technology (ICT) facilities, the classrooms are often too small for the numbers of learners and staff, with significant noise intrusion and interruptions. Too many classrooms are used as corridors. Financial planning is not satisfactory, and the college does not provide satisfactory value for money.

## Curriculum area inspections

Social and life skills

Satisfactory: grade 3

### Context

28. The skills for life curriculum includes communication, literacy, numeracy and ICT. It is offered to all learners on the three courses within the college. Literacy and numeracy are integrated into creative work through a sensory approach. Communication is addressed in all areas and learners have the opportunity to develop practical skills through personal development and within the residences. The majority of learners are working within the pre-entry level of the national curriculum framework.

### *Strengths*

- good achievement of communication skills
- good use of multi sensory approaches to stimulate learning
- good specialist multi disciplinary support

### *Areas for improvement*

- underdeveloped baseline assessment
- insufficiently rigorous recording of progress
- inappropriate match of programmes to learners' needs

### Achievements and standards

29. There is good development of communication skills. Students learn to use communication aids and switches to improve their ability to communicate. Achievement in relation to literacy and numeracy is less well developed. It is not possible to accurately assess student's progress as the starting point is not always sufficiently clear. Learners frequently demonstrate enjoyment of their work and respond positively to staff. There are adequate opportunities for learners to have their achievements recognised through a range of national awards. All learners entered for such awards have been successful.

### Quality of provision

30. Teaching is satisfactory or better in the majority of sessions. In the best sessions teachers make good use of use a multi-sensory approach to motivate students' interests and help them to learn. Good use is made of ICT to support learning. Pre-entry assessment is good and the outcomes are used to develop effective support plans. The baseline assessment is underdeveloped and does not fully reflect the skills the learners have on entry. Reviews of progress are not always sufficiently rigorous and do not fully identify or celebrate the significant progress learners are making.

31. The curriculum focus on communication is appropriate and the development outcomes are good. Teaching methods and contexts for learning are not always sufficiently well matched to individual student. There is an over emphasis on paper based resources with insufficient focus on learning through doing and experiencing. Opportunities for learners to develop useful skills through practical and community experiences are underdeveloped.
32. The college has expanded its work experience provision since the last inspection, and good use is made of the production and distribution of the college newsletter to provide a realistic working environment in which functional literacy and business skills are developed.
33. Support and guidance are good. There is a good specialist multi-disciplinary team approach which effectively supports learners across college. Effective plans for managing behaviour and supporting communication are in place and learners have access to immediate, high quality support from staff with whom they work regularly.

#### Leadership and management

34. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Managers are very committed to enabling learners to improve their communication skills and have made significant investments in resources. This is already having an impact and the team have a clear vision for the future. Staff are enthusiastic and committed to continuous improvement.
35. Arrangements for self assessment are detailed although not always accurate in their findings. Staff are very well qualified and have good access to training. The promotion of equal opportunities is satisfactory. The learning environment is unsatisfactory, with poor listening conditions and often cramped accommodation that is not fit for purpose.

Pre-vocational skills

Good: grade 2

Context

36. The creative arts curriculum provides programmes over three years in fine art, performance, music, media, environmental art and dance at three levels. All are underpinned by the Beaumont philosophy to promote independence and improve communication skills so that learners can take more control over their current and future lives. All learners are able to sample programmes and then follow a range of options for most of their formal timetable.

*Strengths*

- high quality of creative work
- good level of in class learning support
- good specialist multi disciplinary support
- outstanding collaboration with community arts providers

*Areas for improvement*

- inappropriate focus on assessment and recording of learning
- inadequate teaching areas

Achievement and standards

37. Learners produce high quality work in a variety of media. There are good examples of learners' art displayed around the college and in recordings of their performances. They make significant progress in the development of communication skills and towards independence through a variety of activities. This includes regular presentations of their work within the college and externally through exhibitions and performances in galleries and theatres in the local community. Learners work hard, are effectively engaged in their lessons and achieve gains in confidence and self esteem through their work. This is exemplified through their obvious enjoyment in classes.

Quality of provision

38. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Most lessons are well structured with carefully planned individualised activities. Teachers plan activities that enable learners to work either independently or in groups to produce their own music or movement through a range of multi sensory activities. The ratio of learning support staff to learners is excellent and the support they give is very effective in most classes. However, some support staff provide too much help and this restricts learning in a minority of lessons. Staff are skilled in using learners' comprehensive support plans to support teaching and extend learning.



39. The needs and interests of learners are successfully met. Outstanding collaborative links with community arts professionals provide excellent opportunities to develop learners' creative and communication abilities. This enables learners to work with contemporary artists, some of whom also have disabilities, and provide excellent role models. As recognised in the self assessment report, systems for baseline assessment and tracking of achievements are too complex and do not provide a coherent account of the individual learning. Learners receive regular and ongoing encouragement and feedback about their work in lessons.
40. The use of very good specialist multi-disciplinary support enables learners to take an active part in a wide range of activities by providing comprehensive support and a range of resources. It enables learners to develop their creative talents and extend their communication skills.

### Leadership and management

41. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Communications between staff are good. The self assessment report is comprehensive and evaluative but not sufficiently accurate. There is a specific area plan but actions have yet to have an impact. Quality assurance processes are satisfactory.
42. The promotion of equality of opportunity is good. Positive images of disability and creativity underpin the curriculum. Staff are well qualified and experienced and there is good access to specialist professional training. Too much teaching accommodation is unsatisfactory. There is good use of a range of specialist equipment and this provides further opportunities for learners to express themselves and perform in a range of media.