



Nash College



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

Better
education
and care

Inspection report

Audience
Post-sixteen

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50017

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Basic information about the college

Name of college:	Nash College
Type of college:	Independent, residential, specialist
Principal:	Andrew Giles
Address of college:	Croydon Road, Hayes, Bromley, Kent, BR2 7AG
Telephone number:	020 8315 4802
Fax number:	020 8462 0347
Chair of governors:	David Harmer
Unique reference number:	50017
Name of lead inspector:	Susan Preece HMI
Dates of inspection:	6-9 March 2006

Background of the organisation

1. Nash College is an independent specialist college that provides residential and day further education and training for 57 young people, the majority of whom are aged 19 or older. The college, which is situated in Hayes on the outskirts of the London Borough of Bromley, welcomes residents and students from all faiths, denominations and backgrounds. Nash is one of a number of schools and colleges run by The Shaftesbury Society.
2. The profile of learners has changed over time and now all have severe, complex or profound learning needs and disabilities. Learners have a range of disabilities, such as Downs Syndrome, cerebral palsy and epilepsy; many also have severe communication difficulties. Of the 57 learners, 29 are male and 28 are female. Currently 13 learners are from minority ethnic groups. The principal took up his post in January 2005 and a new vice principal, principal lecturer and head of student support and care were new to their post in the summer term of 2005.
3. The curriculum is organised into three main strands. Basic skills include communication, literacy, numeracy and ICT. Social and life skills include citizenship, relationships, independent living skills, self advocacy and 'my life after college'. Creative areas include art, design, music, drama, movement and horticulture. The college employs 152 full-time equivalent staff, including a wide range of multi-disciplinary professionals such as speech and language therapists, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, nurses, music and art therapists, relaxation and aroma therapists and a student counsellor. Staff numbers in support and care have recently been increased. Residential accommodation is offered on site and in a house in the local community.
4. The college mission statement is 'Nash College of Further Education is a caring Christian college of The Shaftesbury Society which exists to provide the best possible education and training for young people who have exceptional learning needs brought about by physical, learning, communication and/or sensory disabilities'.

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); 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

Summary of grades awarded

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

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

Social and Life Skills	Satisfactory : grade 3
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Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Satisfactory: grade 3

6. Learners' achievements and the quality of their work across the curriculum are satisfactory. Achievements are well recognised and celebrated. The initial assessment process is comprehensive and thorough, but there is no baseline summary of each learner's overall skills. Learners are successful in developing and extending their communication skills using different media and they make significant increases in their self-confidence and social skills.
7. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Teachers make effective use of multi-sensory approaches to promote communication and to develop and extend learners' skills. Learning support staff are well managed and therapy staff successfully contribute to learners' individual programmes. Assessment processes are insufficiently rigorous and in a minority of lessons activities do not match individual learners' needs. Target setting is inadequate and the monitoring of learners' progress is underdeveloped.
8. The college's approach to educational and social inclusion is satisfactory. The representation of staff from black and minority ethnic groups, and those with disabilities, is good. Twenty-three per cent of learners are from minority ethnic backgrounds. There is a good range of enrichment activities available in the evenings and at weekends for residents. Arrangements for providing learners with adaptive equipment and arrangements for the development of literacy and numeracy support are generally satisfactory. The college is compliant with relevant equalities legislation, and procedures to promote the health, safety and well-being of individual learners are comprehensive.
9. Guidance and support for learners are good. The specialist multi-disciplinary therapy team works together well, makes a significant contribution in developing learners' communication skills and enables them to take a greater part in their learning. The tutorial system is being developed to better track learners' progress. Induction and preparation for transition are good and learners are helped to understand and develop the skills they need for life after college. Communication with families is good.
10. Leadership and management are satisfactory and have improved since the last inspection. A new management structure has been introduced and communications are good. The opportunities for staff development are good and spending has significantly increased. The site is unsatisfactory for wheelchair users. The self-assessment process is comprehensive, accurate and the new arrangements for quality assurance are adequate overall. However, the monitoring of key curriculum processes is not consistently rigorous. Governance and financial management are satisfactory and the college provides satisfactory value for money.

Capacity to improve

Satisfactory: grade 3

11. The college's capacity to improve is satisfactory. The self-assessment report is good. It identifies clearly the college's strengths and areas for improvement. The development plan is realistic and makes appropriate reference to the risks facing the college in relation to its current site. Staffing levels have been significantly increased in order to meet residential care requirements. There is insufficient specialist expertise among teaching staff and learners' progress is not always effectively captured. Actions to improve the management of the college have been effective. The college has positive support from The Shaftesbury Society, and members of staff value the support and guidance provided by the senior management team.

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

12. The college has made satisfactory improvements since the last inspection, when it was judged inadequate. Key functions of the college, such as procedures for health and safety and quality assurance, are being implemented and a new and effective management structure has been successfully established. More than half of the weaknesses identified at the last inspection have been effectively resolved. However, weakness in some aspects of key curriculum processes remain.

Key strengths of the college

Strengths

- good development of self-confidence and communication skills
- comprehensive multi-disciplinary initial assessments of individuals' needs
- successful use of multi-sensory teaching methods
- good therapy support
- rigour of the self-assessment process.

Areas for improvement

The college should address:

- the setting of individual targets
- the recording of learners' progress
- the insufficient specialist expertise in teaching
- the inappropriateness of the college site
- monitoring the quality of teaching and learning.

Main findings

Achievements and standards

Satisfactory: grade 3

13. Learners' achievements and the quality of their work across the curriculum are satisfactory. Achievements are successfully recognised and celebrated through college events, such as 'star achievers' at the weekly whole college meeting and the annual awards ceremony. The initial multi-disciplinary assessment process is comprehensive and thorough, but baseline summaries of each learner's overall skills are not yet in place.
14. Learners are successful in developing and extending their communication skills. They develop skills in being able to direct others so that they can make choices and so take more control of their lives. One learner was observed directing a teacher with eye pointing, sign and vocalisation to enable her to choose the music she wanted to hear. Learners with more complex communication difficulties make choices through the effective use of pictures, symbols and signing. These opportunities are well promoted through daily living skills such as choosing menus and shopping for groceries. Self-advocacy skills are effectively promoted and the young people enjoy their successes. One learner who now has the confidence to chair the students' union has developed significant skills in organising and running the meetings. Some learners are successfully working towards national awards where it is appropriate to their individual need, for example units in self-advocacy and small animal care.
15. The recording of learning is limited. Too many individual learning targets are overly complex and imprecise, so it is not possible to accurately record small steps of learning. Achievements over time are not sufficiently identified or used to inform future planning but the college is very aware of these weaknesses. Learners acquire appropriate skills that prepare them well for moving on from the college and living in the community. One learner, who is also attending another college part-time, is developing the skills to manage a personal assistant for use in her future life. Some learners have successfully been involved in community projects, such as the Bromley Gardens Project, through which they were able to grow flowers and herbs and sell them at the local farmers' market. Learners' attendance is good, but learners are not always punctual.

Quality of provision

satisfactory: grade 3

16. The college accurately judged the quality of its teaching and learning in the self-assessment report to be satisfactory. It recognises its weaknesses in baseline information, specialist teaching expertise and the recording of learning. The majority of staff work confidently and use their knowledge well to enable learners to communicate and learn effectively. The college's judgement that learners enjoy their learning and benefit from a range of teaching methods was confirmed by inspectors in the curriculum area inspected.

17. Lesson planning is adequate. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively and have a good understanding of their role. There is effective communication between education and care staff. Many activities are planned to make effective use of the local community and to provide realistic contexts for learning. The skilled and unobtrusive management of learners' behaviour is good. Initial assessment is comprehensive, but the outcomes are not always used effectively. Individual baseline summary information is not collated and it is not possible to accurately measure learners' progress over time.
18. In the more successful lessons there was a good balance of individual and group work. Teachers planned practical multi-sensory activities to enliven their teaching. For example, in a lesson for learners with profound and complex needs, the use of a variety of tactile and sensory objects, such as an aromatherapy cushion, musical instruments and crinkled paper, stimulated and developed their sense of smell, hearing and touch. Intensive interaction and music were used successfully and staff made good use of signing, pictures, symbols and objects of reference.
19. In less effective lessons, learners' targets lacked challenge and, because of weaknesses in assessment and planning practice, had already been achieved. Too many targets were overly complex and irrelevant so that they could not be monitored effectively, nor were they communicated to learners in a meaningful way. Some teaching and support staff have yet to develop the skills necessary to ensure that recording is carried out effectively. Recording is not always evaluative or does not include what individuals need to learn next. Individual learning plans are adequate overall and include, wherever possible, the student's long term goal after leaving Nash College. Although these plans are regularly reviewed, the conclusions of the reviews do not adequately inform changes in targets in a sufficiently timely manner.
20. The college's approach to educational and social inclusion is satisfactory. Programmes and activities have improved since the last inspection and are now judged both by inspectors and the college to be satisfactory. There is a good range of enrichment activities available in the evenings and at weekends for residents. These include bowling, shopping, Christian Union meetings and trips to local pubs and restaurants. The college recognises the value of healthy recreation and leisure, and learners are encouraged to access a range of activities and other educational providers in the local community. An understanding of a healthy lifestyle is well promoted throughout the curriculum. Opportunities for learners to participate in work placements are adequate and enable learners to make a positive contribution to their community.
21. Procedures to integrate care and education are now satisfactory. The college's student union provides good opportunities for learners to influence decisions within the college. For example, they have been able to bring about changes to meals and the common room. Arrangements for providing learners with adaptive equipment and those for the development of literacy and numeracy

support are generally satisfactory. The college is compliant with relevant equalities legislation, and procedures to promote the health, safety and well being of individual learners are comprehensive. Risk assessments are undertaken for all learners, activities and venues.

22. Support and guidance are good. The specialist multi-disciplinary therapy team works together well, makes a significant contribution in developing learners' communication skills and enables them to take a greater part in their learning. There is good promotion and effective use of alternative and augmentative communication. Most staff are skilled in using effective communication strategies with learners with the most profound and complex disabilities. Thorough induction arrangements are in place to ensure that learners become familiar with the college. Learning support staff are well deployed to ensure that all learners can successfully participate in their individual programme.
23. The tutorial system is adequate. Key workers and educational tutors are working towards a more comprehensive tutorial programme to better track learners' progress. Safeguarding and arrangements for the protection of vulnerable adults (POVA) are sound. These are frequently reviewed and there is a regular monthly training event for staff. The transitions co-ordinator successfully ensures that learners are well prepared for moving on and individuals are helped to understand and develop the skills they need for life after college. Communication with families is good.

Leadership and management

Satisfactory: grade 3

24. Leadership and management are satisfactory and have improved significantly since the last inspection. The new senior management team provides supportive leadership, which focuses on developing underpinning systems to enable the college to improve. A clear management structure is in place, with key accountabilities firmly established and an appropriate range of committees, teams and working groups. Communication across the college is effective. The principal regularly meets staff and governors from The Shaftesbury Society, and they are kept well informed about the situation at the college. Strategic planning is robust, with clear, identifiable aims. Action plans are rigorously monitored.
25. Opportunities for staff development are good. The college has significantly increased its spending on the staffing establishment and staff development. Forty additional care staff have recently been appointed. A comprehensive induction programme has been introduced. All staff are expected to undertake training at appropriate levels, funded by the college. Teaching staff are expected to achieve an additional specialist qualification.
26. Quality assurance procedures are comprehensive and embrace much of the college's work. The self-assessment report is good. A detailed cycle of monitoring and review has been introduced, and action taken as a result of course reviews and parents' questionnaires. A performance management

system has been introduced across the college, and staff have regular supervision or review meetings. While teachers are frequently observed, judgements about the quality of teaching and learning are sometimes too generous. However, teaching is showing signs of improving, with fewer unsatisfactory lessons than during the last inspection. The college does not have robust systems for capturing distance travelled by learners. The learners' complaints procedure is not available in a sufficiently accessible form, and does not have time scales for responses.

27. The current site, which is built on a hillside, is not adequate for anyone who uses a wheelchair. The Shaftesbury Society is investing a significant amount in improving the site, while it searches for a local alternative to the current arrangements. The college has taken appropriate action in response to safeguarding requirements, and is compliant with the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA) 2001 and the Race Relations (Amendment) (RRA) 2000. A start has been made to the promotion of equality of opportunity into the curriculum. The college does not provide formal staff guidance in relation to personal relationships, sexuality and sexual health.
28. The arrangements for governance have improved. Local members are currently being recruited to join the newly-established local board of governance. Information provided for trustees is comprehensive and enables them to monitor standards and the quality of provision. The board has not had specific training in equalities and protection issues, although they have formally agreed the policy. The Shaftesbury Society has provided significant advice and support for the senior management team. Financial management is satisfactory and support as identified on learner schedules is being provided. The college provides satisfactory value for money.

Curriculum area inspections

Social and Life Skills

Satisfactory: grade 3

Context

29. The curriculum is divided into three strands: basic skills, social and life skills and creative areas. Learners are grouped by ability. The majority are working at pre-entry level and, when appropriate, take a life skills modular national award.

STRENGTHS

- good achievement of communication skills
- good support and guidance for learners
- good use of multi-sensory approaches to stimulate learning.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- the inconsistent planning and recording of learning
- the collation of individual baseline summaries from which to measure progress
- the insufficiently rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning.

Achievements and standards

30. Communication skills are well developed in many lessons. Individuals learn to use alternative and augmentative communication aids and switches and so improve their ability to communicate. Achievement is evident in literacy, although numeracy is underdeveloped. It is not possible to clearly identify the progress of individual learners as the baseline of their skills is not well established. Learners frequently demonstrate enjoyment of their work and respond positively to staff. There are good opportunities for achievements to be recognised, including the appropriate use of national awards.

Quality of provision

31. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. Teaching is mainly satisfactory, although there are wide variations in teachers' planning towards meeting the needs of all learners. Where lessons are good or better teachers make effective use of a multi-sensory approach to motivate learners' interests and help them to learn. They use multi-sensory techniques actively to engage learners, particularly those with the most complex needs. In an art class, learners used paint as medium to explore colour, texture and the movement of paint through space. They were able to repeat this experiment effectively in order to create their own pictures. In a less successful ICT lesson learners did not use computers and spent much of their time cutting and pasting paper.

32. Since the last inspection the processes underpinning the curriculum have improved significantly, but are inconsistently applied by all teaching staff. Key components of learner programmes, such as assessment, target setting and recording of progress, are still being developed and not all members of the teaching staff are sufficiently skilled at using these effectively. The multi-disciplinary initial assessment is good, but outcomes are not always used effectively. The setting and evaluation of targets are underdeveloped. The college does not have a baseline summary for each learner and so tracking of progress is not coherent. There has been significant improvement in opportunities to learn in the community and to access local further education (FE) and adult colleges.
33. The college has extended its work experience provision since the last inspection and nine learners participate in work placements in the local community. Learners have many opportunities to exercise choice and to improve in their social skills and self-confidence both within lessons and the residences. Procedures to integrate care and education are now satisfactory.
34. Support and guidance are good. There is a good specialist multi-disciplinary team approach, which keeps staff informed about individual needs and supports learners across college. In a morning greeting session there were good contributions from the physiotherapist, speech and language therapist and educational support staff. They ensured that effective posture, positioning and communication were in place for all learners at the beginning of the educational day. The deployment of support staff and the ratio of staff to learners is good.

Leadership and management

35. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Significant improvements include staff appraisal, staff training and development, team working and the increased number of support staff in the classroom. The self-assessment process is comprehensive and mainly accurate. The monitoring of the individual learning plans, target setting, and the recording of achievement has improved since the last inspection, but is in need of further development. The college knows what it needs to do to bring about improvement. The promotion of equal opportunities across the curriculum is satisfactory overall.