



Hereward College



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

Better
education
and care

Inspection report

Audience
Post-sixteen

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130474

Contents

Basic information about the college	3
Background of the organisation	4
Scope of the inspection	5
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Summary of grades awarded	6
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Overall judgement	7
Main findings	9

Basic information about the college

Name of college:	Hereward College
Type of college:	General Further Education College with specialist facilities for learners with learning difficulties and or disabilities
Principal:	Janis Firminger
Address of college:	Bramston Crescent, Tile Hill Lane, Coventry Warwickshire, CV4 9SW
Telephone number:	024 76461231
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Chair of governors:	Douglas Keith
Reference number*:	26184
Unique reference number:	130474
Name of reporting inspector:	Gill Reay, HMI
Dates of inspection:	5 - 8 March 2007

* charity or registered business number of the company running the college

Background of the organisation

1. Hereward College is a general further education college located in Coventry. It offers inclusive provision with specialist facilities for learners with a wide range of learning difficulties and or disabilities. The college is a charity by exemption led by a board of governors.
2. The college has undergone significant disruption. During 2005/06, a number of management issues resulted in the resignation of the principal in July 2006. After serving in an acting capacity from February 2006, the deputy principal was appointed to the post of principal in October 2006. An acting director of teaching and learning was also appointed in April 2006, following the resignation of the previous post-holder. A review of the senior management structure has now been completed by the board of governors and a revised structure is being implemented.
3. During the period since February 2006, college staff have focused on restoring the confidence of stakeholders, including the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI), parents and learners. Outstanding issues from previous inspections and reviews, including Ofsted, CSCI and the LSC commissioned McIntyre Report (November 2005) have now been addressed, and the college has received an overall good quality rating from the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) in November 2006.
4. The college is committed to becoming a centre of excellence for inclusive provision and in providing the best learning experience that enables learners with diverse needs to realise their personal potential. A key college priority is to provide further education opportunities that enable learners to achieve academic and vocational qualifications, and to develop the necessary independence skills to support a successful transition to adulthood and, where possible, to employment.
5. Learners attend the college on a full- or part-time basis. The college offers a wide range of vocational and academic programmes ranging from entry level to level 3 including business, information communication technology (ICT), management, creative studies, Skills for Life, transition, and social and life skills. In 2006/07, there are 117 residential learners and 321 day learners of which 317 are aged 19 years of age and above. Approximately 287 learners are female and 235 are male. The majority of learners are funded by the LSC. Two residential learners attend other local provision for part of their programme. The number of minority ethnic learners match those of the college's locality. Most full-time learners attend the college for an average of three years.

Scope of the inspection

6. 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.

Summary of grades awarded

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

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Satisfactory: grade 3

7. The achievements and the quality of learners' work are good. Standards and success rates have been maintained over time. Learners make good progress in a range of national awards and especially in independence and personal skills. Retention rates are high and many learners are successful in securing appropriate further and higher education and more independent living arrangements on leaving the college. The RARPA (Recognising and Recording Progress and Achievement) initiative is developing well for use in the enrichment curriculum.
8. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Revised arrangements for initial assessment are good. However, teachers do not always use learners' prior achievements effectively to place them on appropriate programmes. Information and communication technology is used well in some lessons. Where group sizes are small this limits peer interaction, co-operation and the development of problem-solving skills. There are significant inconsistencies in the way teachers plan and monitor learners' progress.
9. The college's approach to social and educational inclusion is satisfactory. The curriculum provides a good range of activities for learners but work experience programmes and links with local general further education colleges are underdeveloped. Equality and diversity are satisfactorily promoted through the curriculum. The college effectively uses and collects learners' views. However, representatives from the students' union raised concerns about a perceived lack of challenge in the curriculum and appropriate learning programmes.
10. Guidance and support for learners are good. Specialist multi-disciplinary teams make a significant contribution to assessment and promote learners' ability to communicate more effectively, develop emotional and physical good health and wellbeing. The use of assistive technology is good. All staff have recently undertaken training in the management of behaviour, resulting in a consistent approach to behaviour management. Communication with parents is good.
11. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The principal and senior managers provide a clear strategic direction for the college. Staff morale is high. The quality improvement arrangements are satisfactory and the management information system is good. Arrangements for the observation of teaching and learning are not sufficiently rigorous. The college is compliant with equality and diversity legislation. Teachers and governors do not yet have sufficient knowledge of the college's and their own responsibilities in relation to child protection. Governance is thorough. Teaching and residential accommodation remain a significant area for improvement. The college provides satisfactory value for money.

Capacity to improve

Good: grade 2

12. The college shows good capacity to improve further. Managers demonstrate a strong commitment to continuous improvement. The self-assessment process is effective and the report largely accurate, although there is little use of target setting and the analysis of data is underdeveloped. Quality assurance is satisfactory and action planning for improvement is developing well. The staff development programme is extensive. Curriculum modifications, for example the transitions programme, are well designed and meet learners' needs.

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

13. The college has made good progress in three out of the four areas for improvements identified at the last inspection in 2003: employment-related activity; tutorial support; and aspects of key skills. A good start has been made in addressing the RARPA agenda, and initial assessment has been revised to give a clearer picture of learners' needs. The extended curriculum has been developed and the transition to independence curriculum modified to meet learners' needs. Although substantial improvements have been made to the accommodation and grounds, accommodation remains unsatisfactory.

Key strengths of the college

Strengths

- consistently high success rates
- good multi-disciplinary specialist support and guidance for learners
- extensive staff development and training programmes
- effective leadership to bring about change.

Areas for improvement

The college should address:

- residential and teaching accommodation
- inconsistencies in the planning, monitoring and recording of learning
- the rigour of the teaching and learning observation scheme
- insufficient training in safeguarding.

Main findings

Achievements and standards

Good: grade 2

14. The college has consistently high success rates in most curriculum areas. Overall, the college's success rate in 2006 was 80% and places the college in the top 25% of general further education colleges (GFE). Success rates for long programmes at levels 1 and 2 for learners aged between 16-18 years of age, remain high but have fallen slightly in 2006. Although this issue is noted in the self-assessment report there is insufficient analysis of the implications of the underperformance on some programmes.
15. Pass rates on Skills for Life programmes are high and have increased significantly, from 50% in 2004/05 to 83.6% in 2005/06. The college monitors achievements of learners from minority ethnic backgrounds at a whole college level but there is little analysis of the data to improve learners' achievement. Standards achieved by learners are good and there is good progression between programmes, for example in media. Learners demonstrate increased self-confidence and develop good independence skills. Most also develop research and independent study skills in the subjects that they are studying.
16. The college has recently revised and improved initial assessment processes, a summary of which is available to all staff through the management information system. The revised system was introduced in 2006/07 and provides a good baseline from which to plan learning. However, the use of the summary to place learners on appropriate qualifications, plan teaching and identify and track learners' goals is not yet consistently implemented. The recognition and recording of progress and achievement (RARPA) in non-accredited programmes are developing well and relate to achievement in the enrichment programme. Internal moderation processes have identified the need for further staff training in assessment and in developing target setting.
17. The college has increased its focus on the development of work experience programmes and has appointed a co-ordinator to oversee the work. Learners are able to develop work-related skills through project work and internal work placements, such as on the Young Enterprise scheme. This work also enables learners to participate in the life of the community. However, there are currently insufficient external placements for learners undertaking vocational programmes.
18. Attendance and punctuality are reported through the management information system and revised monitoring procedures are being developed. The attendance rate in 2005/06 was 84% for all learners and 87% for learners in residence, both of which are above national values. Learners enjoy their studies and work with due regard to health and safety.

Quality of provision

Satisfactory: grade 3

19. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers, support tutors and learners work well together to develop skills, increase independence and confidence. For example, following a rehearsal of one of their songs in a music lesson, learners were able to evaluate their progress critically.
20. There is good use of information and communication technology in some lessons. Both teachers and learners use the electronic boards to illustrate concepts and demonstrate understanding. Group sizes are small and in one case, just one learner is registered for a key skills qualification. This limits peer interaction, co-operation and the development of problem-solving skills. Equality and diversity are satisfactorily promoted through the curriculum.
21. The use of assessment in planning and managing learning is underdeveloped. New individual learning plans (ILP) have been introduced. These are accessed electronically and contain the facility to recognise and record progress as it occurs. However, the system is new and has yet to be fully utilised. Some of the goals recorded in individual learning plans are too broad and imprecise to capture small learning steps. For example, 'develop independence' or 'improve spelling'. Insufficient use is made of goals identified in individual learning plans to inform the lesson planning process.
22. There are significant inconsistencies in the way teachers plan and monitor learners' progress. There is a lack of clarity about how the ILP, the individual student record and the review process fit together, reflecting a system in transition. Not all of the accommodation is fit for purpose. In addition, some rooms are small or awkwardly shaped which can limit access, learning progress and development. The self-assessment report notes that good progress has been made in developing and embedding Skills for Life and is largely accurate in identifying areas for development. Awareness raising training has been held to develop a whole college approach and the curriculum has been expanded to include such courses as preparation for employment and managing personal finance. However, whilst this has raised the profile of literacy and numeracy, the provision is not yet integrated and opportunities are missed to recognise and develop literacy and numeracy skills across the wider curriculum.
23. Staff training has impacted on the quality of teaching and learning. For example, recent training in managing challenging behaviour has enabled teachers to develop and apply effective strategies. The observation of teaching and learning focuses on teaching skills and misses significant opportunities to promote effective learning.
24. Programmes satisfactorily meets the needs and interests of learners. The college offers a wide range of academic and vocational courses from pre-entry to level 4 in basic skills, creative studies, business, ICT and management, media, English and physical education. However, numbers in more advanced classes are sometimes too low to allow sufficient variety of activity and exchange of opinion. Learners have the opportunity of studying other

programmes at neighbouring colleges although in practice very few do so. A well designed transition to independence curriculum brings together independence and life skills, enrichment activities and aspects of the tutorial curriculum. The programme is in its first year and has yet to impact significantly on learners' progress in independence. Learners do not have sufficient opportunities for work experience outside the college. However, placements are increasing with the recent appointment of a work experience coordinator. The college runs a number of well designed projects to develop enterprise and employment skills.

25. The college's provision for the advice, guidance and support for learners is good. Support staff include personal tutors, mentors, youth workers, educational enablers, dyslexia specialists, care staff, physiotherapists, a speech and language therapist and a counsellor. Staff are well qualified and receive substantial amounts of training. Good partnerships with Connexions and a conductive education organisation facilitate learners' access to these services. A very positive ethos of shared expertise ensures joint working across departments.
26. The college makes extensive use of assistive technology. Learners have access to a good range of equipment. Careful consultation between speech and language therapists, physiotherapists and assistive technology engineers leads to an appropriate choice of aids. Specialist staff have developed the first nationally recognised qualification in assistive technology. A few learners prefer to continue with outmoded communication aids that potentially restrict their progress. However, a quality group is currently working on a college mobility policy which also addresses issues of hygiene and learners' choice of aid.
27. Multi-disciplinary initial assessment is thorough. The two day process establishes learners' skills, curriculum preferences, support needs and mobility. It leads to a clearly laid out initial advice and guidance statement. However, the process does not always lead to learners being placed on courses at an appropriate level in view of their past achievements. Its connection with a newly developed online ILP is not yet established. The college accurately identified the admissions procedure as unnecessarily repetitive and is working to simplify the process.

Leadership and management

Satisfactory: grade 3

28. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Following a two-year period of significant difficulty at senior management level, the senior staff, led by a new principal, have been engaged in a process of communication and development that has resulted in a change of ethos in the college. Staff morale is high, and over the past year, staff have worked together across the college to improve the provision for learners. Success rates continue to be high, and three of the four key weaknesses identified at the previous inspection are now satisfactory. Communication across the college has improved, particularly between the

residential and academic sections of the college. The strategic priorities in the development plan for 2006/2009 signal a repositioning of the college in response to national and local priorities. Productive partnerships are being developed and the college is beginning to use its specialisms to train staff in other organisations. The staff development programme is extensive.

29. The quality improvement arrangements are satisfactory and have been given increased prominence in the past year. Good use is made of cross college quality improvement teams to bring about change. The newly developed arrangements for the observation of teaching and learning are not sufficiently rigorous, with insufficient focus on learning. The work of the observers is not moderated, the basis for the grading of observations is not consistent and evidence provided does not always support the grade. The staff are extensively involved in the quality improvement plan, which is monitored regularly, but the projected actions do not always show clearly how objectives will be achieved. Complaints are monitored and responded to appropriately. The self-assessment process is effective, involving staff across the college. The report is evaluative and identifies strengths and areas for improvement, but does not provide sufficient analysis where performance has declined, and some of the strengths and areas for improvement are contradictory.
30. The college has appropriate equality and diversity policies and has taken a lead locally in the development of implementation strategies in relation to the disability equality duty. There are some good examples of promotion of equality and diversity in the curriculum but promotion is satisfactory overall. Learners do not have a prayer room. Although staff have had training in relation to the protection of vulnerable adults (POVA), and have enhanced CRB checks, neither they, nor the governors, have received adequate training in safeguarding. Not all staff and governors have received training in relation to the race equality action plan.
31. Governance is thorough and board members have good experience. Staff pay good attention to health and safety, and vulnerable learners have individual risk assessments. Financial management is good. The latest CSCI report confirms that the college provides good outcomes for learners. The management information system produces timely relevant information for staff. The individual learner schedules are satisfactorily monitored, and the college provides satisfactory value for money.
32. Despite improvements made since the previous inspection, particularly in the provision of adapted facilities, accommodation remains inadequate. Too much classroom accommodation remains unsuitable and the residential facilities do not meet the required standards.