



Beaumont College

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Basic information about the college

Name of college: Beaumont College

Type of college: Independent, residential, specialist

Principal: Steve Briggs

Address of college: Slyne Road, Lancaster LA2 6AP

Telephone number: 01524 541400

Fax number: 01524 846896

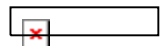
Chair of governors: Ian Johnstone

Unique reference number: 520866

Name of reporting inspector: Keith Dennis HMI

Dates of inspection: 10-13 June 2002

Part A: Summary



Information about the college

Beaumont College is run by Scope, the largest charity working with disabled people in the United Kingdom. Beaumont offers both residential and non-residential programmes for young people between the ages of 16-25 with cerebral palsy and associated disabilities. In recent years, the college has attracted an increasing number of learners with complex needs. The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) funds all 72 students in the current year, 2001/02; 70 of the students are resident in the college with two students on day placements. Of the 72 students, 33 are male and 39 are female; three students are from a minority ethnic group. Residential students come mainly from the northern and midlands regions of England. The college is emerging from a very difficult financial

situation.

The main teaching and residential accommodation is located on one site on the northern edge of the city of Lancaster. In September 2001, the college introduced a revised curriculum framework that offers students 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. The ten core values of the college are reflected in all the courses. The college offers an extended curriculum that uses teaching and residential accommodation.

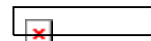
The college has an establishment of 206 full-time equivalent staff consisting of: 126 care staff; 39 teaching staff and learning support staff; 16 business support staff; 16 auxiliary staff; and a multi-disciplinary team of nine specialists consisting of speech therapists, psychologists, nurses and an occupational therapist.

Beaumont 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 services which are in line with Scope's mission'.

How effective is the college?

Inspectors judged the curriculum provision to be good in all three areas inspected. There have been good pass rates in externally accredited qualifications over a sustained period and the student retention rate has now reached the high sector norms. Most teaching is good or very good; none is unsatisfactory. Students receive good support and care. The standard of residential accommodation is poor.

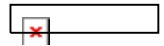
Key strengths



- effective teaching and learning
- a well-organised and relevant curriculum
- the effective development of students' communication skills
- the recognition of individual progress
- good support and care for students

- the effective planning and monitoring of the development of individual students
- clear and supportive leadership from college management.

What should be improved?



- the poor standard of residential accommodation
- the relevance of some students' targets
- the optimisation of individual students' potential
- the use and deployment of student support workers
- the promotion of independent mobility
- the promotion of equal opportunities within the curriculum
- governance and strategic planning.

Further aspects of provision requiring improvement are identified in sections on individual subjects and courses in the full report.

Quality of provision in curriculum and occupational areas

The table below shows overall judgements about provision in subjects and courses that were inspected. Judgements are based primarily on the quality of teaching, training and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects and courses were inspected. Inspectors make overall judgements on curriculum areas and on the effectiveness of leadership and management in the

range: outstanding (grade1), good (2), satisfactory (3), unsatisfactory (4) and very weak (5).

Area	Overall judgements about provision and comment
Creative arts	Good. An effective and well-qualified team of staff provides lively and suitably varied teaching that is well managed. Students are well supported and produce work of a high standard. The inappropriate size of groups in some lessons hinders learning for some students. There is often a poor match between individual students' goals and subject-specific objectives.
Literacy and numeracy	Good. Teaching of is of a high standard. The provision is well integrated. The acquisition of key skills and communication skills is a high priority and forms the basis for individual learning plans. Initial assessment is neither systematic nor coherent. There is an over emphasis on target setting; some targets are unnecessary and inappropriate.
Personal and social skills	Good. Teaching is effective. Skilled staff use a range of methods to encourage students to participate in lessons. Students' individual goals that support transition to adulthood are an integral part of lessons. Most students progress well, but there is sometimes insufficient emphasis on the development of independent mobility. There is insufficient planning to explore individual students' potential.

How well is the college led and managed?

Leadership and management is satisfactory. There is strong, positive and supportive leadership and management within the college. A clearly expressed vision is based upon well-considered principles of learning and of student support. The college is emerging from a period of successful and constructive change. The curriculum has been effectively repositioned and improvements achieved following an increase in income from students' fees. The college provides satisfactory value for money. There is good management of specialist support for students and of therapeutic interventions. The professional development of staff is very effective and contributes significantly to the improvement of the college. Quality assurance processes support continuous improvement of the college's curriculum and services. Communication within the college is good. The college's internal financial procedures are underdeveloped. Governance arrangements are unsatisfactory and there is inadequate strategic planning. The standard of students' residential accommodation is poor.

To what extent is the provision of the college educationally and socially inclusive?

The college's response to educational and social inclusion is good. Students with increasingly complex and profound learning difficulties and/or disabilities are attracted to the college from a wide area of the country. The college has had particular success in supporting students with severe difficulties of oral communication. It helps them to steadily increase their involvement in both educational activities and in decisions about their daily lives. Contact with the local community provides students with real opportunities for learning. There is insufficient promotion of equal opportunities in the curriculum beyond issues of disability. Opportunities for students to participate in external work placements are underdeveloped and there are few instances of students attending local further education colleges to extend their studies.

How well are students and trainees guided and supported?

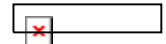
Support and guidance for students is very good. Entry and induction procedures involve a multi-agency approach. The college develops comprehensive and suitably detailed individual support plans for students that are monitored and reviewed regularly. However, incomplete information from previous education specialist assessments and underdeveloped diagnosis of basic skills reduce the initial effectiveness of support plans. Key workers have a central role in monitoring the whole student experience and work closely with personal tutors and care support staff. There is a skilled team of learning support staff that works well with teaching staff. The devotion and dedication of all staff is valued by the students, and their parents and carers. However, during some lessons, there

is ineffective use and deployment of student care support workers. The arrangements for progression from the college are thorough.

Students' view of the college

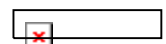
Students' views about the college were taken into account and a summary of their main comments is presented below:

What students like about the college



- very supportive teachers and care staff
- most of the teaching sessions
- the adult atmosphere and staff attitude to students
- opportunities to be more independent and gain confidence
- staff listening to and acting on students' ideas
- the feeling of belonging to a big family
- their friends and the residential experience.

What they feel could be improved



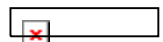
- some aspects of their living environment

- some over-long lessons
- more staff with the ability to understand students' communication aids
- the amount of activities at the weekend
- putting in another lift
- the food.

Other information

The college inspection report will normally be published 12 working weeks after the inspection. Once published, the college has two months in which to prepare its post inspection action plan and submit it to the local LSC. The college's action plan must show what action the college will take to bring about improvements in response to issues raised in the report. The governors should agree it before it is submitted to the local LSC. The local LSC is responsible for ensuring that the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) receives the college's post inspection action plan within the stipulated two months.

Part B: The college as a whole



Achievement and standards

1. Students achieve well across a broad range of externally accredited qualifications offered primarily at entry and pre-entry level. A good recording system indicates that 99% of the 168 students entered for awards over the period 1999 to 2001 were successful in gaining qualifications in, for example, independent living skills, work preparation, preliminary cookery, computer studies, and numeracy and literacy skills. Over the same period, 50% of students entering the college had severe oral communication difficulties; all of them progressed well in the use of a range of personal communication aids. In 2001/02, some 36% of students in the first year of programmes had a pre-entry level of literacy. Whilst success in national accreditation has remained high, the proportion of learners achieving qualifications in the three years to 2001 has declined. This trend reflects the increase in the proportion of students with complex and severe learning difficulties and/or disabilities enrolling at the college. Nevertheless, most students make satisfactory progress throughout their stay at college.

2. The student retention rate has improved considerably over the last three years. In 2000, the

college retention rate was 89%; at the time of inspection, it had reached 99% for 2002. Attendance in classes during the inspection was 90%.

3. The monitoring and recognition of individual students' achievements are good. A competence tracking system and targets for improvement for non-accredited programmes have been developed for each student, together with profiles of competence in basic skills and key skills. Progress against anticipated individual achievement is monitored monthly and reviewed at a course level and includes the use of a visual 'traffic light' system. Teachers regularly review progress with every student, with particular attention given to individuals who are not progressing as anticipated. Most students make good progress against the individual targets, but some of the more able students do not study at a sufficiently high level. In a few lessons, insufficient demands are made of some students.

4. There is inadequate provision of work experience for students. At the time of inspection, three students were on work experience outside the college. Two of them, together with a further eight students, had the opportunity of work experience in the college. In 2001/02, six students attended courses in personal development, local history, art and crafts, information technology (IT) and creative writing at the local adult education college. There are a few formal links with colleges of further education for students to undertake qualifications at level 2 or above.

5. Most students make good progress in developing their self-confidence, and improving communication, interpersonal and other key skills. The standard of students' work in lessons is good and most apply themselves diligently. In particular, the performance work of students in creative arts is very good. The students take pride in exhibiting their work around the college. However, achievements in literacy and numeracy are sometimes difficult to identify because of inadequate initial assessment.

6. Student destinations are monitored carefully. In 2001, 89% of students continued in further or adult education after leaving college. Destination data showed that 26% of leavers moved on to supported living, whilst another 15% progressed to residential settings. Some 59% returned to the family home as a result of difficulties in securing independent accommodation. Of the eleven leavers in 2002, nine are expected to attend general further education colleges and two to attend day services.

Quality of education and training

7. The overall standard of teaching is good. Inspectors graded 72% of lessons as good or very good; none was outstanding and none was less than satisfactory. A significant feature of the educational provision is the simplicity of its philosophy: an approach to learner development that is based upon the educational and care needs of an individual. There is no attempt to superimpose externally devised models of learning. The standard of teaching and learning in literacy and numeracy is especially good when compared with standards in many similar residential specialist colleges. A particular strength is the effective use of a range of teaching and learning techniques that encourage all students to communicate. The college enrolls an increasing number of students with significant oral communication difficulties. As a consequence, staff have developed a strong focus upon effective communication with, where appropriate, the use of communication aids. Students are given sufficient time and personal space to develop the confidence to participate in lessons or conversation. The skilful, patient and observant approach of teachers often encourages students to learn and communicate.

8. Students benefit from the logical planning of lessons that address their individual needs. There are strong and positive working relationships between staff and students. All students experience good care and attention. Students enjoy their work and respond well to staff. Most staff understand the effect that cerebral palsy has on learning. Many of the lessons observed were imaginative and innovative; the emphasis was on learning and teaching for individual students. In these lessons, experiential and sensory learning activities resulted in measurable progress for many learners.

9. In a significant minority of lessons, some students did not have sufficient demands made upon

them nor did they fully engage in the learning activities. There is a major emphasis on setting and monitoring targets for achievement within students' individual learning plans. However, some of the target setting at curriculum level is unnecessary and irrelevant. In addition, opportunities to monitor students' learning and experiences across the extended curriculum are missed. In a few lessons, the teachers used approaches to learning, and resources, which were inappropriate for the age of the students.

10. Most of the teaching and learning support staff are highly qualified. Many have at least a first degree and additional specialist qualifications. In some curriculum areas, teachers and students benefit from visits from curriculum and education experts. Staff benefit from well-targeted professional development activities that relate closely to the college's operational objectives and curriculum strategy. The effective learning support staff also contribute positively to students' learning. However, student care workers are not always well deployed or used to full advantage during lessons.

11. Students work in attractive and well-maintained accommodation. The displays of their work throughout the teaching areas and connecting corridors are visually stimulating and celebrate the work of the whole college community. Learning materials are good. Commercially produced resources combine well with those created in-house. IT is used effectively in general classrooms as well as in specialist workshops. The college has developed a good range of adaptive resources to assist individual students with their communication. However, some of the teaching space is too small for the size of groups and restricts opportunities for learning.

12. The residential accommodation is inadequate to meet the needs of learners. Much of the accommodation is outdated. Some parts of the college grounds are not fully accessible to wheelchair users.

13. The process of pre-entry and initial assessment is good. There is a multi-agency approach to the construction of comprehensive individual support plans. These plans provide the basis for thorough and rigorous continuous assessment throughout a student's time at the college. Initial assessment takes account of information from previous schools, students' visits to the college, parents' views and students' wishes. The individual learning plans and learning support plan, which forms the core curriculum, are based on the outcomes of initial assessment. Although the plans are well constructed, initial and baseline assessment lack both cognitive information from previous schools and key diagnostic educational measures, especially for literacy and numeracy skills. As a consequence, monitoring of improvement in these skills is difficult. When teachers assess how much a student has actually improved in each aspect of the individual support plan, they are sometimes faced with a proliferation of targets connected with the teaching of the curriculum. Often, too much time and attention is devoted to the recording of information on fairly minor targets. There is no effective electronic information system to assist staff in the tasks of recording, monitoring, analysing and sharing of this information on targets.

14. All aspects of students' development are regularly and accurately recorded. Individual targets are closely monitored. There is good co-ordination between care staff, teachers and learning support staff. There are effective processes for the moderation of the work of students undertaking national accreditation. External verifier reports are very positive about the standard of internal assessment.

15. The curriculum offered by the college is broad and appropriate to the needs of its students. In response to the changing student population at the college, the staff have worked together well to develop a curriculum that is relevant to the needs of students with predominantly severe or profound disabilities. The college has taken into account the views and experiences of past students. In designing the curriculum, it has focused on the skills, knowledge and understanding that students will require in order to live as independently as possible when they leave the college. The curriculum framework is coherent. There are common themes running through all the new programmes, for example, the development of communication, of 'finding a voice'. However, there is insufficient emphasis on meeting all students' individual needs and measuring the development of their skills. For the most able students, there are few opportunities to gain accreditation at level 2 or higher,

either within the college or at other local colleges.

16. A wide range of enrichment activities is provided in the evenings and at weekends. The key workers and personal tutors co-operate well and provide opportunities for students to improve their skills through the extended curriculum. Key workers are particularly effective in helping students to make the most of their communication aids. Contact with the local community provides students with real opportunities for learning. For example, a local dance company works with the students in the college.

17. Support and guidance for students are very good. The induction takes several weeks and contributes the development of the individual support plan. Specialist and therapeutic interventions are good. The team of specialist staff, which includes speech and language therapists, a physiotherapist and nurses, plays a central role in enabling students to engage in and benefit from the curriculum. The individual support plans are based on person-centred planning and are well designed and effective. Procedures for all aspects of students' support have been developed and are regularly monitored. The effectiveness of the interventions is reviewed every month. These reviews are attended by key workers, personal tutors and relevant specialist staff. Strategy meetings are convened if any element of the student's programme needs amendment. There is effective emphasis on developing communication skills through the use of communication aids. Each student has a communication plan, which identifies electronic aids being used, and outlines the most effective ways for staff to communicate with the student. However, there is insufficient emphasis on the development of mobility so that more students can become independently mobile.

18. The key worker and personal tutor provide regular personal support. Students also have access to counselling, should they require it. There is close contact with parents/carers who are informed of the procedures used to provide support. The team of learning support assistants provides skilled support for students, and works well with the teaching staff. However, the involvement of care staff to help students during lessons has been less successful. Often they are timetabled with students they do not know. This can reduce their effectiveness if they are not familiar with a student's needs or with their communication aid.

19. Careers advice is provided through the local Connexions service. The arrangements for progression are thorough. The process starts in the autumn term of a student's final year; most students are found placements that enable them to continue learning.

Leadership and management

20. Leadership and management is satisfactory. The senior management team has led the staff successfully through a period of substantial change, as the needs of the students who attend the college have become more complex. The staff support these changes and feel fully involved in a process that has involved revising the vision and guiding principles of the college. Ten foundations of independent living underpin all college developments and practices.

21. Communication is good. There are regular meetings at all levels in the college, and one afternoon each week is used as common time for staff for briefings, meetings and training. The staff work well together in their teams; links between the care staff and teaching staff are good. Effective communication has been a major factor in the success of the revision of the college curriculum. Considerable emphasis is placed on enabling students to 'find a voice', which is evident in the value placed throughout the college on listening to students' voices. For example, the restaurant has introduced a visual and aural system to enable students to make choices from the menu. The student council meets weekly to discuss issues raised by students and to plan and organise fund-raising and social events. Communication is a key theme in each programme area.

22. The management of the curriculum, of specialist support and therapeutic interventions is good. Strategies to improve student communication are particularly well developed. The management of the care staff is also good. They are supervised well and benefit from a planned programme of training which can lead to National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs). All staff take part in an extensive programme of professional development which focuses on identifying and meeting

students' needs.

23. The college does not have a strategic plan, because Scope is currently involved in discussions about the future direction of the college. However, it has a development plan which clearly identifies the areas for improvement in the college. The college's approach to achieving improvement is effective. Specific areas are highlighted, action is taken and the degree of improvement is monitored over time. Teaching is an example; teaching observation grades have improved substantially over the past year and staff feel able to discuss their own progress. There are regular audits of aspects of care, such as the management of medication. The staff make good use of a range of feedback when monitoring college services. For example, they ask parents/carers to complete a questionnaire after the annual reviews. These are collated and analysed. If action is required, it is taken. The self-assessment report is reflective, and makes realistic and honest judgements about the provision. However, the individual subject reviews are not as thorough or fully developed.

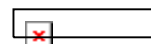
24. The standard of residential accommodation is poor. Bathroom facilities are unsatisfactory. There are insufficient up-to-date aids for students with the most complex needs. There are no kitchen facilities in most of the units, so many students are not able to prepare their own meals as part of learning to live more independently. Reports following inspections by the social services department have highlighted these issues for the last few years. The accommodation, despite a continuous programme of refurbishment which has helped to make it bright and cheerful, has not been upgraded for many years and does not meet current standards. Only substantial investment will meet these standards.

25. The college has an appropriate range of policies, which reflects the needs of students. However, the equal opportunities policy has not been specifically designed for the college. While there is good attention paid to aspects of disability throughout the curriculum, there is insufficient attention to issues of race and gender when preparing students for transition to the next stage of their lives. Any untoward incidents are recorded and complaints are acted upon. Risk assessments are rigorous. The staff approach to bullying or harassment by a student is to work with that student to understand the cause of the behaviour, and to support the student to bring about change.

26. Governance arrangements have not been satisfactory. The governing body of the college is a local sub-committee of the main Scope executive committee and is essentially advisory. Until October 2001, there had been little involvement of the Scope trustees with the college governing body. A Scope project group has been established in the college to clarify, amongst other issues, the relationship between Scope trustees and the Beaumont governing body. An agreement was reached whereby two Scope trustees attend governing body meetings, and report back directly to their executive committee. It was too soon at the time of the inspection to evaluate the effectiveness of these arrangements. There has been little involvement of Scope trustees in the educational provision at the college. The Beaumont governors have close contacts with the college, and some sit on college sub-committees.

27. Scope has not effectively devolved the management of the budget to the college. Monthly management reports are not always sufficiently detailed. The college's internal financial procedures have weaknesses. However, despite historic difficulties over fee levels for students, the college has managed its finances well in the provision of resources for teaching and learning, and in this context provides satisfactory value for money.

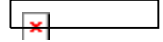
Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas



Creative arts

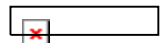
Overall provision in this area is **good (Grade 2)**

Strengths



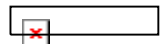
- Well-managed lively teaching
- effective staff teamwork
- the high standard of work of many students
- creative and often imaginative curriculum
- significant development of the confidence and skills of learners.

Weaknesses



- the poor match between learning goals and specific subject objectives
- the inappropriate group size in some lessons
- insufficient challenge in the work for some students.

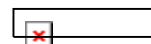
Scope of provision



28. Creative arts within the college is offered as a two-day programme each week to all first-year students, who may then choose to continue into their second and third years. The programme

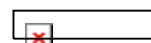
provides an introduction to the subject area and the opportunity to explore personal issues and includes performing, visual, photographic, sensory and music art forms. A theme chosen each year provides opportunities for students to create a final piece either as a group or individually. There is no specifically vocational element in the programmes.

Achievement and standards



29. Students achieve well. They do not obtain any formal accreditation, but an assessment schedule records their activity. The curriculum provides an effective opportunity for students to express themselves. The evidence of their increased confidence and skill is recorded to great effect through performance, visual art and film media. More formal records indicate significant progress for many students in communication and other key skills. The standard of much student work is very good and has been shown to local and national audiences. However, for some students, the limited nature of the learning goals reduces the possibility of wider achievement. Some student achievement is restricted by the inability of teachers in a minority of lessons to address the complex needs of students.

Quality of education and training



30. Overall, teaching is good. Lessons are well planned, well managed and address the particular needs of students effectively. Lively and suitably varied teaching maintains the interest of most students. Learning is evident in most lessons. Students build upon the activities of previous lessons, and their progress is carefully observed. Students are aware of their increased self-confidence and independence, and most obviously enjoy their work. Some groups were very large and individual students neglected their work for significant amounts of time without being noticed. Teachers missed opportunities to promote and improve mobility and movement. The range of ability among learners is wide, yet there was little recognition and monitoring of individual ability in the setting of short-term improvement goals.

31. Most staff teaching in this area are well qualified. They are experienced in teaching students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in the context of the creative arts. Their enthusiasm and talent provide a stimulating environment in which creativity flourishes. Learning support workers have good educational backgrounds and specialist qualifications. Some student support staff appear uncertain of their role and are less effective in supporting the learning needs of students. The teaching accommodation is good. Specialist rooms are available for music, performance and art. Video editing suites are available nearby. A range of ICT is available and well used. Learning resources are good and include a variety of art materials, video equipment, cameras and costumes.

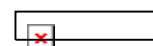
32. Teachers base the assessment schedule for creative arts sessions on the development of key skills, which are highlighted throughout the programme. Assessment against skill levels is unsatisfactory. Progress cannot be properly measured. Individual student learning goals are closely monitored by teaching staff and learning support assistants, but these rarely match the specific curriculum objectives of the lesson. In the most effective lessons, single goals for each student had been selected, as appropriate, whilst related subject goals were included in the students' individual planning documents. There is a simple initial assessment which identifies the creative experiences to date for each student. These contribute to planning, but not to the setting of subsequent standards and goals, particularly for more able students. On a minority of occasions, individual lesson objectives were not always shared with the students. For many students, the completion of a task was celebrated, but little emphasis placed on how to achieve further improvement on this.

There were few examples where students reflected on this work or sought the views of the peer group.

33. The creative arts programme offers effective opportunities to develop personal and social education, and literacy and numeracy skills. Communication is a major focus. Teachers encourage creativity by work in college and by visits to art galleries, theatres and other arts events which broaden and enliven the students' experience. The sensitive achievement of creative work can contribute to the emotional health of students. It can also enhance the development of independence and confidence which were frequently mentioned by students as the main benefits of their time at college.

34. Students benefit from the good support of teaching staff and learning support assistants. In a few lessons, staff were over supportive of students. They did not allow students to independently make choices. There is a strong and effective emphasis on helping students to communicate, particularly those students with profound and multiple learning and physical disabilities. In some lessons, the student staff ratio was unsatisfactory. Some students with visual or auditory difficulties were not given sufficient support to manage communication. There was little effective support to improve and increase mobility or movement.

Leadership and management

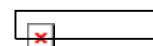


35. Leadership and management are good. The curriculum co-ordinator provides strong and enthusiastic leadership for the committed and co-operative team of tutors and support staff. Regular meetings are held to develop and monitor the progress of the students and the courses. Team teaching is particularly effective. The course structure is coherent and well planned and has the support of senior managers. Its many aspects are effectively linked within a common assessment framework. Staff record students' progress meticulously. The number of goals recorded for many students is excessive. Much staff time is taken up in documenting detail that has little or no relevance to students' progress.

Literacy and numeracy

Overall the provision in this area is **good (Grade 2)**

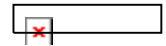
Strengths



- effective and imaginative teaching
- well-planned integration of literacy and numeracy teaching
- good opportunities for improvement of students' literacy and numeracy skills

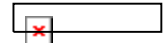
- a good strategy for developing communication skills
- effective use of information and learning technology.

Weaknesses



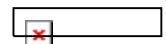
- the lack of a coherent initial assessment for literacy and numeracy
- some unnecessary target setting
- insufficient challenge for some students.

Scope of provision



36. Literacy and numeracy provision is integrated across the curriculum and is offered to all students. The teaching of literacy and numeracy skills is built into all lessons. Teachers develop and monitor the acquisition of these skills by students. Where appropriate, students are following external accreditation frameworks including Open College Network of the North West (OCNNW), Foundation Accreditation in Vocational Education (FAVE), Foundation Accreditation in Maths and English (FAME) and Accreditation for Learning and Living (ALL). Students have the opportunity to practice literacy and numeracy skills across a variety of activities.

Achievement and standards



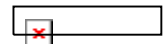
37. There is good achievement of individual student goals; standards are consistently high. The curriculum introduced in September 2001 provides a framework for measuring progress in communication and key skills. Standards across the extended curriculum are consistently high. The standards of performance on accredited courses are good with achievements consistently higher than the national average. The assessment, verification and moderation of accredited programmes are good.

38. There are shortcomings in the diagnostic assessment of literacy and numeracy skills. Initial

assessment lacks coherence and rigour. Subsequent assessment of key skills and communication skills is more thorough and enables appropriate individual targets to be set. Where used effectively, the initial assessment provided a good basis for developing the students' individual learning programme, but in some instances it did not contribute to the learning plan or the planning of progression.

39. The college has adapted the national pre-entry standards for literacy and numeracy throughout its curriculum and has identified individual targets for each student relating to these standards. This is not satisfactory for all students, with some inappropriate target setting by staff and duplication of targets.

Quality of education and training



40. In most lessons, students benefit from teachers' detailed planning which is based on the goals of individual students. Staff spend much time on such planning and on recording their progress against the plans they have made.

41. Teaching is consistently good or very good. Teachers are enthusiastic and students are well motivated. Most lessons offer a range of suitably demanding activities. Individual students' needs are met. Teachers' skilful leadership ensures that all students take part in the lessons and make progress. In the most effective lessons, students understood why they were being asked to do a task, how well they were doing and how they could improve. Learning support workers oversee and support the progress of individual learners effectively. In a few lessons, some of the students were insufficiently challenged and adopted a passive role. Teachers generally have high expectations of their students. In one lesson, the teacher was using a variety of imaginative aids to simulate a series of weather conditions to enable a group of students with profound and multiple learning difficulties to experience the sensations of different kinds of weather. All the students were expected to participate, work in groups and respond to the activities. In another lesson, the students were expected to plan and act out a play about activities they had experienced. The teachers regularly took opportunities to improve communication, literacy and numeracy skills. A process of peer assessment enables students to measure their own progress and that of other students.

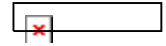
42. The design and content of the curriculum, including opportunities to use IT, provide learners with achievable objectives. For example, in one lesson, students were required to complete a complex form about future employment options. The exercise was realistic and the teacher used a number of external speakers, including past students, to explain why the activity was necessary.

43. Many staff create their own teaching materials, some of which are of a high standard. Overall resources are good, although in some cases, the accommodation restricts some teaching and learning activities.

44. The integration of literacy and numeracy across the curriculum is particularly effective. The assessment of key skills is thorough. Staff work diligently to plan their lessons to determine contributions to assessment. Staffing levels for additional support for literacy and numeracy is inadequate, but learning support workers provide students with significant help.

45. Students enjoy their college experience and are confident. They place a high value on the levels of support they receive and respond positively to the challenges and expectations placed upon them.

Leadership and management



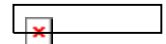
46. Leadership and management of this aspect of the curriculum are good. The provision is well planned by individual teachers and programme managers. The acquisition of key skills and communication skills is a high priority for staff and students, and forms the basis of individual learning plans. However, there is no college-wide strategy for the further development of literacy and numeracy provision. This weakness has been identified in the self-assessment report and associated development plan.

47. The effective emphasis of development of students into capable, responsible adults, drives all developments within the programme area. Staff hold appropriate qualifications and many have extensive experience. Staff development activities are effective and staff regularly update their skills and knowledge

Personal and social skills

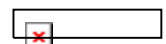
Overall provision in this area is **good (Grade 2)**

Strengths



- a strong curriculum rationale
- good teaching
- the effective integration of personal goals within teaching programmes
- good individual progress.

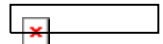
Weaknesses



- insufficient demands placed upon some students to extend learning

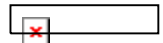
- insufficient emphasis on the development of independent mobility
- inappropriate approaches to learning for some young adults.

Scope of provision



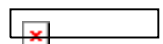
48. The college provides personal and social education for all students as an integral part of each of the three college certificates. The programme is run through a series of modules, which are shaped to suit the requirements of each course. The aim is to enable students to develop as valued people in a community. Accreditation includes ALL, OCNNW, FAME, FAVE and work preparation.

Achievement and standards



49. Most students make good progress. They gain confidence and improve their capabilities in communication, self-awareness and interpersonal skills. This encourages appropriate and positive adult responses from students. Most students consistently demonstrate enthusiasm, application and commitment to learning. Some students are set insufficiently demanding work.

Quality of education and training



50. Some 70% of teaching was good or better; none was unsatisfactory. In the most effective lessons, teaching was planned to match the requirements of individual learners and focused on preparation for their future. In these lessons, the aim was to encourage students to play a full part in lively activities that helped them to develop and reach their personal targets. In the less effective lessons, insufficient use of available resources and inadequate planning reduced students' opportunities to learn. In a small number of sessions learning resources and approaches to teaching were used which did not match the age range of the students. In many lessons, students communicated and collaborated well with each other and the teacher. Their personal contributions in role-play were very effective. However, in some lessons some students disengaged for periods of time, including whilst having to wait for their turn.

51. Teaching and learning support staff are well qualified, skilled and experienced. Staff understand the needs of learners and most work confidently and expertly to enable them to communicate and learn effectively. Staffing ratios of learning support assistants and subject care workers match the learning and personal needs of students, but this sometimes leads to teaching groups which are too large. The range of resources and learning opportunities, including the activities in the local community, is good. IT resources are very good and include touch screens, joysticks, large monitors, digital cameras, inter-active whiteboards, projectors, colour printers, motorised tables and symbol-based software. There is very effective use of a wide range of alternative and additional

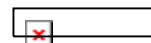
communication resources. A few resources are inappropriate for the age of the students. Examples include some inappropriate table heights, cramped benches, small rooms and teaching areas subject to interruptions. Some resources are unsuitable and restrict students' opportunities and independence.

52. Regular, comprehensive and detailed reviews of students' progress contribute to the process of personal goal setting. Assessment to establish curriculum goals is less effective. Sometimes inappropriate emphasis on personal goals conflicts with curriculum aims. There is also some over-recording and duplication of work on less significant targets. The ways in which students are involved in their own assessment varies in effectiveness. Some recording of observed students' achievement is very sensitively managed, but some distracts and disrupts the students. Some students' portfolios for accreditation are well organised.

53. In their work with students, teachers constantly foster self-awareness, interpersonal skills, self-advocacy, independence and citizenship. Good attention given to the students' eventual transition from college is often in response to identified student concerns. There is insufficient emphasis on the development of independent mobility and on equality issues that affect gender, race and cultural diversity, with the exception of disability awareness. A good range of extra curricular activities helps students to develop new interests and increase their confidence.

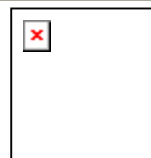
54. Staff value the thorough and effective individual support plans provided for all students. Personal tutors and key workers operate effectively together and provide a sound and consistent approach to learning. Arrangements for students' transition from college are good; there are detailed careers action plans for final-year students. One-to-one learning support for students is very effective, and contributes to improving their communication and learning. Some student support and agency staff are inexperienced and do not sufficiently understand how to promote learning and help students to develop as adults.

Leadership and management



55. Leadership and management are good. Managers have established a strong curriculum rationale for students' transition to adulthood based on the college's ten foundations for independent living. The programme aims are well established in the areas and across the college. The new curriculum is a very appropriate response to the changing student population and its needs. Students' support workers are sometimes ineffectively deployed and managed, and as a result, are unclear on their role in lessons. Their uncertainty means that they miss opportunities to support student learning effectively.

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