



Office for Standards
in Education

Foxes Academy

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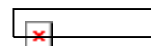
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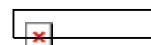
Basic information about the college



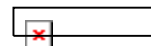
Name of college:	Foxes Academy
Type of college:	Independent, residential, specialist
Principal:	Maureen Tyler-Moore
Address of college:	The Esplanade Minehead Somerset TA24 5QP
Telephone number:	01643 704450
Fax number:	01643 708249
Chair of governors:	n/a
Reference number*:	3192770
Name of reporting inspector:	Joyce Deere
Dates of inspection:	2-5 June 2003

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

Part A: Summary



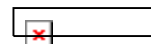
Information about the college



Foxes Academy is situated on the seafront in Minehead, Somerset. It is an independent limited company, which was started in 1996 as a training hotel. The company has two directors. The college currently trains 46 students between 18 and 27 years of age. Some 19 of these students are funded by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). Of the 19 students, ten are female and nine are male, and one is from a minority ethnic background. All the students have mild to moderate learning disabilities, and some have additional behavioural and mental health needs. None of the students require personal care and all are residential. Foxes Academy has been taking students funded by the LSC since 2001, when three students were funded.

Most students follow a three-year programme. In the first two years, they focus on improving their independent living and social skills, and follow vocational options in hospitality and catering, and horticulture. In the third year, students can take National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) level 1 or 2 courses in five different areas of hospitality and catering: food preparation; food service; kitchen porter; housekeeping; and reception. The final term is spent in a work placement, which may be with a local employer in the town. At the time of inspection, no LSC-funded students were taking NVQ courses, as all were in the first or second year of training. The daily timetable for all students is based on typical shifts of the hospitality and catering industry, and students are trained in the hotel from the start of the course. This training is reinforced by the daily living and social skills used by students when running their own residences. The college's mission is to 'provide training and care for our students, to the highest possible standard in a wide range of areas. To help our students integrate with society and be seen as valuable people who have skills to contribute'.

How effective is the college?



The quality of provision is satisfactory overall. Many of the students achieve high standards; the quality of much of this work is good; and they make good progress. Provision for social and life skills is good, and for vocational studies it is satisfactory. For literacy, numeracy and communications, the provision is unsatisfactory. The college provides a very effective environment for students to learn, to become independent and to find employment. The context for learning is innovative, and the standard of residential accommodation is high.

The college's key strengths and areas that should be improved are listed below.

Key strengths

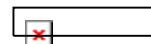
- good development of skills for employment
- innovative context for learning
- good development of communication skills
- very effective teaching of personal management skills
- good use of practical activities as the basis for learning
- high standard of residential accommodation
- good staff development programme
- links between teaching and residential staff
- strong personal support for students.

What should be improved

- implementation of financial systems to record expenditure related to students
- implementation of the quality assurance systems
- promotion of race and gender aspects of equal opportunities
- provision for literacy and numeracy
- staff understanding of cognition
- accuracy and precision in initial assessment, target setting and monitoring of progress
- teaching resources for horticulture, information and communications technology (ICT), and literacy and numeracy
- use of ICT in teaching.

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

Quality of provision in curriculum and occupational areas

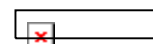


The table below shows overall judgements about provision in subjects and courses that were inspected. Judgements are based primarily on the quality of teaching, training and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects and courses were inspected. Inspectors make overall judgements on curriculum areas and on the effectiveness of leadership and management in the range: Outstanding (grade 1), Good (2), Satisfactory (3), Unsatisfactory (4), Very Poor (5)

Area	Overall judgements about provision, and comment
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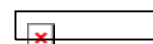
Social and life skills	Good. Students make good progress in developing daily living and social skills. The teaching of practical skills and the development of personal management skills are good. The learning needs of the more able students are not fully met. Good use is made of the local community for learning.
Vocational studies	Satisfactory. The development of practical skills for employment is good. The teaching of practical subjects is good overall. However, a minority of students are on a programme that does not match their abilities. The resources for horticulture are unsatisfactory. The quality of students' work is mostly good.
Literacy, numeracy and communications	Unsatisfactory. The development of communication skills is good, and the teaching of numeracy in practical settings is mostly satisfactory. However, there is little development of students' literacy skills. Initial assessment is poor and targets are too general. The overall leadership and management of this area are unsatisfactory.

How well is the college led and managed?



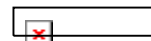
Leadership and management are satisfactory. The directors and senior management team give a clear strategic direction for the college that encourages success. The majority of students make good progress, and teaching and learning are good in vocational studies, and social and life skills. The self-assessment process involves all staff, but it is not sufficiently evaluative, and target setting is underdeveloped. Quality assurance policies are well documented, but lack clarity and focus. Staff development is linked to strategic planning and staff take relevant qualifications that help them in their work with students. Staff appraisal and induction are well documented and systematic. The teaching observation scheme is ineffective in bringing about improvements in teaching and learning. Financial management, in particular the procedures related to the funding for individual students is unsatisfactory. Two out of three areas of learning are satisfactory, and the college provides satisfactory value for money.

To what extent is the college educationally and socially inclusive?



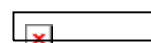
The college's response to social and educational inclusion is satisfactory. The college values each student as an individual and encourages a positive attitude towards disability. It is particularly effective in integrating the students into the local community and most of the students who have left the college have found employment. The complaints procedure is communicated to students, and the ethos of the college discourages any form of bullying or harassment. The hotel is accessible for wheelchair users, although the residential houses are not. The college has recently updated its policies and developed an action plan in response to the requirements under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA) 2001. Not all staff have had equal opportunities training, although the issue is routinely included in the NVQ training. The college is aware that it has not placed sufficient emphasis on the development of students' literacy and numeracy skills.

How well are students and trainees guided and supported?



Support and guidance for students are good. Students value the personal care and support provided by staff and they develop in self-confidence, independence and maturity. Students are given support to help them to engage with the local community, and they are well prepared for working life through a well-developed work-experience programme. The induction is thorough and students settle quickly into the life of the college. There are good links with parents/carers. The arrangements for diagnosing and working with students with dyslexia are not adequate. Students receive very good personal support from tutors, but the college has had difficulty in providing specialist counselling support. Careers guidance and links with Connexions are developing, but materials for independent careers research are insufficient.

Students' views of the college



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

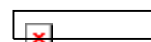
What students like about the college

- the company of friends
- learning things that will lead to a job
- being treated like an adult
- opportunities for extra activities, such as drama, sport and music
- learning to be more independent
- living in the middle of a town.

What they feel could be improved

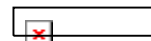
- the early bedtimes
- 'other students going in my room'
- the hours of work in the hotel
- the colour of the bedroom walls.

Other information

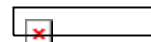


The college inspection report will normally be published 12 working weeks after the inspection. Once published, the college has two months in which to prepare its post-inspection action plan and submit it to the local LSC. The college's action plan must show what action the college will take to bring 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. All the students are over 18 years of age. Pass rates in NVQ levels 1 and 2 have been 100% between 1999 and 2002. Similarly, students have been successful in achieving the main goals of moving to independent living and finding employment. Between 1999 and 2002, 57 leavers out of 61 found full-time or part-time employment and 55 progressed to independent living.

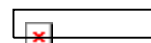
2. Much of the students' work is good. They develop employment-related skills in the hotel, where they work towards industrial standards. Staff have high expectations of the students. From the start of the programme, students' daily schedules of attendance are based on shifts that in turn reflect the normal working day of employees in the hospitality and catering industry. Students also develop good self-management and organisational skills, and can, for example, plan well for the day ahead. However, the work in relation to developing literacy skills is unsatisfactory.

3. Students generally make good practical progress on their courses and also develop in social and personal confidence. The progress they make in the development of social and communications skills is particularly successful. Students improve their interpersonal skills by working in small groups on most tasks. However, it is not possible to measure progress in either literacy or numeracy, as there is insufficient recording of the students' starting point. The most able students across the provision are not developing their potential for using higher order skills.

4. Under the current arrangements, it is not possible formally to measure the distance travelled by each student. Recording of progress is based on the current situation, with no reference to the starting point for each student. This issue is now starting to be addressed by the college and plans include reference to each student's starting period.

5. During the week of inspection, students were unfailingly punctual and attendance was 100%. College attendance records are meticulously kept and show high rates of attendance. None of the current cohort of students has left the college. Records for previous years show that retention rates have been above 95%, in line with the high rates for the sector.

Quality of teaching, training and learning



6. The quality of teaching and learning is good in social and life skills, and much is good in vocational studies. The teaching of communication skills is very good, but there is little understanding of the development of literacy skills. A particular feature of the best teaching is the use made of practical tasks in order to help students learn. Wherever possible, staff use concrete examples as the basis for teaching, and students develop their skills and understanding as a consequence. Staff make good use of the opportunities for 'real life' practical work in the residences, the hotel and the local environment. The development of social and personal management skills is encouraged through the use of small group work and students are encouraged to develop interpersonal skills that are of great value in the workplace. A significant weakness in the teaching is the poor matching of the curriculum to individual need, particularly for the more able students. Too often the most able students within the group were given tasks that were not sufficiently demanding, or were asked to demonstrate skills they had practised

skills.

7. The staff are appropriately qualified for their key roles. Teaching and care staff are required to gain qualifications in both care and in teaching, and all members of staff who currently teach the students either have these, or are working towards them. However, there is little expertise in helping students to develop literacy and numeracy, and there has been insufficient training for all staff in understanding cognition. The teaching accommodation, which consists of the hotel and the residences, is good, and provides an effective base for learning. Residential accommodation is of a high standard. Students live in accommodation that is appropriate for their level of independence. The residences are well furnished and comfortable, and well placed in the centre of the town, so that students have ready access to the local community. Some students move to 'bedsits' within the houses, as they grow in independence. Resources for learning are satisfactory overall. Students learn in realistic settings, and the resources reflect this. However, the horticulture provision is under-resourced and there are insufficient ICT and literacy resources for learning. The college pays particular attention to health and safety, and there are risk assessments for all students and activities.

8. Formal assessment and monitoring of progress are not satisfactory. Many of the systems have only been in place for a few weeks, and it is not yet possible to evaluate them fully. The initial assessment consists of a period in residence prior to acceptance at the college, followed by a six-week period of extended assessment during the first term. This process is still evolving, and has recently been revised for the new cohort that will start in September. However, for the current cohort of students, it does not provide a useful base on which to plan a student's programme. Students starting at the beginning of the academic year were all placed on the same level of programme, and insufficient attention was paid to information provided by other agencies and students' previous attainment. Targets in all areas of the curriculum are too often general, and sometimes expressed as negatives, emphasising deficits, although in practice, the staff express these positively when working with the students. The systems in place for monitoring students' progress are newly developed. General aspects of progress are now monitored weekly by the tutor, with a formal monthly review of progress, based on contributions from all tutors. This is not yet consistently implemented. The current termly reviews of progress do not provide any information about distance travelled, simply recording where the students are in relation to any current targets. The internal verification system did not identify weaknesses in literacy and numeracy provision.

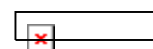
9. The use of a training hotel as the base for learning is innovative. It provides an innovative programme that meets the needs and interests of most students. The use of a training hotel as the basis for learning provides a wide range of opportunities for students to develop employment skills, and to improve their daily living skills. Individual programmes of work, care and support, enable students to progress to NVQ awards. This arrangement has been very successful for previous cohorts of students. However, the college has recently introduced a new curriculum for the first two years of the programme which is in the early stages of development. The college recognises that it initially focused too much on meeting the requirements of the new award, rather than the needs of individual students. All students were initially placed on level 1 of the curriculum, irrespective of ability. Insufficient attention has been paid to the development of students' literacy and numeracy skills and needs. The extended curriculum is well managed, has an adult focus, offers diverse opportunities, and is jointly planned by students and staff. There are extensive and significant links with the local community. Students are involved in local theatre groups and take full advantage of the local facilities. The work-experience programme is well developed, providing students with the opportunity in their final year to work in an unsupported placement, in preparation for open employment. A significant number of past students have made a successful transition to independent living and employment on leaving college.

10. Students receive good support and guidance in all aspects of college life. The prospectus is informative and there is positive feedback from parents and students about the interview and pre-placement assessment process. There are very effective procedures in place to monitor attendance and punctuality: attendance during the inspection week was 100%. The induction process is well managed and is supported by a useful student handbook, which helps students to settle quickly into college life. There is very good personal support from teachers and care staff. Students have close links with the home environment, head of care and training manager. Students' individual learning

needs are assessed before and during their time in college. However, the initial assessment does not fully identify literacy and numeracy needs of students who may need additional support for dyslexia.

11. A revised personal tutor system has been put into place very recently. It is too soon to judge the effectiveness of the new arrangements, but inspectors noted that staff actively listen to students and follow up on issues raised in discussion. Staff know students very well and students feel that they can approach any member of staff for support. The guidance for students relating to career progression and work-related issues is well structured in the vocational programmes. However, resources and materials for independent careers research are insufficient. The college has recently linked to Connexions and a home host link is now available to students on a weekly basis. This link is too new to evaluate.

Leadership and management



12. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The directors and senior managers provide a very clear direction. The mission and values of the college are understood and shared by all staff. It is too early to evaluate the achievements and destinations of current LSC-funded students, but standards previously achieved by students, rates of retention and progression have been very high and students have been outstandingly successful in finding employment. There is effective management of the development of communication skills for all students. Good leadership from managers fosters a culture of commitment to students' success and achievement.

13. The targets in the strategic plan and subsequent action plans are not sufficiently detailed. They do, however, make good links to the recently produced SENDA and Race Relations (Amendment) Act action plans. All staff have recently undertaken awareness training related to the college's mission and strategic documents.

14. Quality assurance policies and procedures are well documented. New systems of review and monitoring have been developed, but they lack coherence and clarity of purpose. The college responds well to the views of students, parents and employers gained through surveys. Quality assurance of work-experience placements is well managed. There are many productive partnerships, including the local further education college, employers and community groups. The teaching observation scheme has not been effective in helping staff to improve their teaching, and it failed to identify the weaknesses in the development of literacy and numeracy teaching, and the lack of promotion of equal opportunities issues. It awarded grades to lessons significantly higher than those by inspectors. The self-assessment process is effective in gaining responses from all staff. It is relatively new, and the quality of review is underdeveloped and not sufficiently evaluative. Challenging targets for improvement are not set. There is good risk assessment.

15. A cycle of weekly meetings ensures that all staff can meet, and has greatly improved communication across the college. Operational management is effective. The directors and senior management team efficiently manage the estate and accommodation. The college is beginning to use and analyse progression and destination data. A designated member of staff, who liaises closely with students and staff, carefully monitors attendance and punctuality.

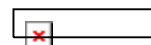
16. There are extensive staff development opportunities. Staff development opportunities are linked to strategic planning. Appraisal is well established and documented in the staff handbook. The college is developing strategic objectives to be incorporated into the current appraisal cycle. The induction programme for new staff is well planned and very effective.

17. The college is effective in providing a challenge to stereotyping in relation to disability, but issues relating to race and gender are less explicitly promoted. Students are valued members of the local community and act as successful ambassadors for the college. The college has been slow to

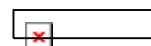
respond to recent legislation, but is now fully compliant with SENDA and Race Relations (Amendment) Act legislation, and policies and action plans are in place. Staff training is planned for August and September 2003. Systems for complaints and appeals are clear and well documented. There have been no formal complaints reported to the LSC. Harassment and bullying policies and procedures are also in place, and issues raised by staff and students are dealt with effectively before requiring the attention of the formal procedures.

18. Financial management is weak and there is a lack of robust systems. Audited accounts are prepared by external accountants, and the college now shows a small profit, but current systems cannot demonstrate how LSC funds are deployed. Aspects of the specialist provision for individual students, as set out in the schedule and purchase orders, are not fully implemented. However, resources are used efficiently to improve the quality and use of the accommodation and the staffing, and Best Value principles are applied to all purchases. The college's provision is satisfactory overall and it provides satisfactory value for money.

Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas



Social and life skills



Overall provision in this area is **Good (Grade 2)**.

Strengths

- good development of daily living skills
- much good teaching
- effective strategies for improving students' social skills
- good use of a variety of settings for learning.

Weaknesses

- little understanding of teaching literacy
- unsatisfactory initial assessment.

Scope of provision

19. The 19 LSC-funded students are all in the first or second year of their programme, and are working towards an accredited award in social and life skills. Teaching takes place in formal and informal settings, by working in a shift pattern which covers early mornings and evenings, as well as the main part of the day. Lessons take place in the kitchens and lounges of the students' houses, and in the local community. The majority of students are engaged in daily living skills for half of the weekly programme.

Achievement and standards

20. Students' work is of a generally high standard. Most have made good progress since joining the college and show a genuine enjoyment of the tasks they undertake. However, more able students only make satisfactory progress in some lessons, because they are repeating skills which they have previously learnt, and have not yet moved on to the higher levels of work of which they are capable.

21. All students have developed a good range of skills in personal care and organisation, and nearly all students are able to prepare for the day ahead independently. They follow established routines well and arrive at sessions punctually. Students make good progress in developing their practical skills in horticulture or catering, and in making decisions about practical activities. Their understanding of instructions is good. They use kitchen utensils and equipment with care, showing an awareness of the possible risks. Students work together well. They have developed a good understanding of the importance of group decision-making and they respond well to advice on how to resolve differences. Students enjoy using their skills in community settings and shop locally, buying everything needed for the running of their residences.

22. Students are making satisfactory progress in applying their knowledge of numeracy in support of their daily living skills, and use them for cooking and shopping. However, students' work in literacy is less well developed. The staff lack knowledge of a greater range of strategies to develop literacy skills and this prevents students from making better progress, and restricts the amount of work students are able to do on paper in support of their practical activities.

Quality of education and training

23. Teaching is good in most lessons. Practical activities are well planned and include a suitable range of tasks for the majority of students. Occasionally, the planned activities are rather too easy for the more able students. Tutors explain the purpose of activities well, especially the relationship between planning and carrying out a task. Students listen carefully and are keen to take part in decision-making. They respond well to the range of options presented to them. Tutors provide clear instructions, which are explained in a direct language which is understood by all students. They provide frequent reminders about hygiene and safety, which many students are now able to anticipate. Questions are directly related to the task in hand, which avoids any confusion and enables students to make relevant responses. Tutors' extensive work with students in formal lessons and informal settings enables them to get to know the personal needs of each individual. Students are confident in their company and trust their judgments. As a result, tutors are able to manage students' behaviour well and encourage them to develop a better level of social skills.

24. An improved initial assessment has recently been introduced and assessment of students' progress is carried out regularly. Tutors are becoming more familiar with methods of assessment, but they still lack sufficient skills to recognise when students are ready for the next level of work. Targets for literacy and numeracy are not specific. Much of the recording of progress is very general and lacks specific reference to the skills students have acquired. Tutors make good judgments about the level of intervention in students' work, often stepping back when they are carrying out practical tasks to enable students to make decisions for themselves. Tutors make good efforts to include all students in the assessment of their work, seeking their opinions and evaluations of sessions.

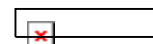
25. Curriculum planning has been improved and schemes of work provide a good sense of the breadth of the curriculum. They demonstrate how tutors make effective use of the good level of resources available for daily living skills in the students' houses and in the surrounding community.

Leadership and management

26. The management of social and life skills is satisfactory. There is a good level of liaison between the training manager and the tutors, which has led to positive attitudes to professional development. The tutors are keen to develop their skills and they have undertaken training which has provided them with a good foundation in teaching. They have made good progress in a relatively short time and now teach with a consistency which meets most students' needs. There is a willingness to undertake further training to help them to develop improved strategies in areas of weakness, such as in the teaching of literacy. There are reliable systems for monitoring the quality of tutors' planning, which is discussed at regular meetings with the training manager. Further quality assurance through the observation of lessons has had limited impact and has not identified the areas of weakness in teaching strategies. The staff have recently recognised that they need to be more selective in the use of an external award, which is not appropriate for all of the students.

27. The managers and tutors share a strong commitment to equal opportunities for all students, regardless of their level of difficulties. They have promoted the interests of students within the community and have encouraged them to take part in as wide a range of activities as possible. This is a cornerstone of much of the development of students' social skills, and responses within the community to student involvement are very positive. However, there has been less explicit consideration of other issues related to equal opportunities. The self-assessment report was not evaluative, and some of the weaknesses were not identified.

Vocational studies



Overall provision in this area is **Satisfactory (Grade 3)**.

Strengths

- very effective development of skills as preparation for employment
- good teaching of practical vocational skills
- very effective use of a working hotel to provide learning opportunities
- good links between residential and teaching staff.

Weaknesses

- insufficiently detailed target setting
- insufficient use of ICT
- poor resources for horticulture training
- poor matching of programmes to the needs of a minority of students
- inadequate quality assurance of teaching and learning.

Scope of provision

28. All 19 students follow pre-vocational options in hospitality and catering, with a further option of horticulture. These options are provided either in the hotel, or in the gardens of the residential houses. All students take hospitality and catering, but not all choose to do horticulture. They can study at pre-entry levels 1 to 3. Most are on level 1 programmes and are in the first year of study. Catering and hospitality is offered at NVQ levels 1 or 2, usually in the third year. There is no NVQ offered in horticulture. The scope of the inspection included observation of NVQ classes in catering and hospitality.

Achievement and standards

29. In 2001/02, pass rates were 100% in NVQs at levels 1 and 2 in hospitality and catering. However, none of the current LSC-funded cohort is yet taking an NVQ, and the pre-vocational accreditation framework has changed. It is too soon to evaluate fully the impact of these changes. Of the current cohort, the majority have made good progress over the academic year on the vocational aspects of the programme. However, for a minority of students, the programme is too easy and does not take sufficient account of their previous attainment. Students develop good employment-related skills; they are punctual, polite and relate well with each other. Many learn to work well with the hotel guests. Progression to employment has been excellent for previous cohorts of students, with 57 out of 61 leavers finding employment. The quality of students' work in relation to their goals is mostly good, although the goals are too often very general. The majority of students learn to perform the practical tasks associated with running a hotel or gardening, and reach the high standards expected of them by the staff. However, a few students are not sufficiently challenged.

Quality of education and training

30. The overall standards of teaching and learning are good, particularly the teaching of practical tasks in hospitality and catering or gardening. Most lessons observed were good or better. In the best lessons, staff use students' preferred communication methods, and work set is presented in an accessible format, including text, symbols or pictorial means. Staff are patient and take considerable care to ensure that skills have been learned. They build upon work in previous lessons and provide a range of different tasks that reflect the different needs of the students. Appropriate behaviour is positively acknowledged and students respond well to this approach. Most students work hard and enthusiastically to complete the tasks set. However, in a minority of lessons, the more able students were kept occupied, but were not learning very much.

31. A significant strength of the vocational skills provision is the use of the working hotel and the local environment as the basis for learning. The work set is 'real' and the training and learning that takes place in the working hotel reflects expectations of the industry. Students are expected to behave as employees and to take responsibility for skills such as timekeeping and reporting back any issues. They learn about health and safety as part of their every day activities. Regular contact with hotel guests reinforces learning, and students learn to complete a range of practical tasks involved in the running of a hotel, including the role of kitchen porter, stillroom assistant, housekeeper and receptionist, as well as a range of catering roles. Teachers do not incorporate targets for literacy and numeracy into lesson plans. There are missed opportunities to develop students' literacy and numeracy skills using naturally occurring opportunities in the vocational areas. For example, students used weighing and measuring skills in the gardens in a range of activities, including marking out one-meter square areas for planting, and counting plants/seeds for planting. These skills were not identified in learning goals or lesson plans.

32. Although the hotel generally provides a good resource for learning, the resources for teaching horticulture are poor. There are insufficient hand tools. The designated classroom area is not suitable. It is an adapted garden shed which has poor ventilation, poor insulation and no heating. The greenhouse is in a very poor state of repair. Panes of glass are insecure and the fabric is a potential hazard. There are insufficient resources to develop ICT skills. There are no computers for students' use in teaching rooms or in the residential accommodation. The use of ICT in teaching and learning is underdeveloped and students are not able to use modern methods to research and collect evidence for their work.

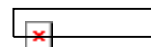
33. The initial assessment does not take sufficient account of students' prior attainment, and does not identify specific literacy and numeracy needs. Targets following the assessment are not sufficiently detailed for the vocational options. All the students were initially placed at level 1 for their vocational work and a significant minority of students should be working at a higher level. The recording of progress is very general. However, the staff provide good feedback during activities, and involve students in the evaluation of their work.

34. Students are well supported. The working partnership between the teaching and residential staff is particularly effective. They make sure that skills learnt in one situation can be transferred and practised in another. Students run their own houses and use the skills developed in the hotel to assist them.

Leadership and management

35. Leadership and management of this curriculum area are satisfactory. Staff work well together as a team. Course team meetings take place regularly and are well attended by both teachers and support workers. Staff feel well supported by managers. Both managers and staff are strongly committed to continuing professional development. The staff work hard to promote positive attitudes towards disability, both in the college and in the local community. Incidents of student bullying or harassment are speedily resolved, although other aspects of equal opportunities are less actively promoted. There are clear procedures and systems for risk assessment and the resolution of complaints from students. Quality assurance processes, including lesson observation and internal verification, did not identify the ineffective use of individual learning plans, and the self-assessment report does not accurately identify most of the weaknesses found by inspectors.

Literacy, numeracy and communications



Overall provision in this area is **Unsatisfactory (Grade 4)**.

Strengths

- very good development of listening and speaking skills
- good use of practical activities for developing numeracy skills
- skilled behaviour management.

Weaknesses

- unsatisfactory teaching and learning of literacy skills
- inadequate specialist training in the development of literacy and numeracy
- insufficient materials for the development of literacy and numeracy
- inadequate initial assessment of literacy and numeracy
- slow strategic development of literacy and numeracy skills across the college.

Scope of provision

36. There is no discrete provision for literacy and numeracy. All literacy and numeracy development is integrated into students' social and life skills, and vocational studies programmes. Some 19 students were receiving literacy and numeracy development at the time of the inspection.

Achievement and standards

37. Students in all sections of the college develop very good listening and speaking skills. They pay attention to what others say and respond appropriately. They wait their turn to speak in groups, but ensure that they are heard when they have something to say. Some students with little speech on entry learn to express themselves. Groups take an interest in and responsibility for the development of all their members. Most students on daily living skills programmes, and on catering and hospitality training, achieve a satisfactory level of numeracy skills. They are able to count, estimate and manage the simple calculations needed for budgeting. Students' literacy development in all programmes is unsatisfactory. Many students are unable to recognise simple words which are well within their capability. It is not possible to assess distance travelled, as the starting point for students is not clear. Attendance at lessons is 100%. Students arrive punctually, ready to start work.

Quality of education and training

38. The teaching of communications across the college is good. All staff take responsibility for the development of group and individual communication skills. Students learn to work as groups and respond appropriately in social situations. The teaching of numeracy is satisfactory. Teachers make good use of practical activities to develop students' numeracy skills. Meal planning, shopping, personal budgeting, table laying, food preparation, seedbed and container preparation, and planting distance and depth are all used to teach numeracy skills. Estimating, calculating, measuring and weighing are taught in contexts which make them relevant. Most students work with interest and concentration in group activities on tasks designed to meet their individual strengths and needs. The teaching of literacy is unsatisfactory. Most teachers lack the necessary range of specialist teaching strategies. They have little understanding of the learning processes involved in literacy development. Students' literacy targets are often too general to measure progress towards them. A few students are set unchallenging targets in both literacy and numeracy. Teachers do not understand how to include more complex skills development for these students in group activities.

In some daily living classes, such as food planning and preparation, literacy is becoming increasingly important and is much enjoyed as a group activity by students, but is not developed appropriately for individual students, some of whom want to develop their skills further.

39. Resources for literacy and numeracy are inadequate. Teachers have not received training in specialist teaching techniques for literacy and numeracy. There are no books or computer software for developing skills. The single computer for all students is seldom used.

40. Assessment methods are ineffective. Initial assessment systems have recently been revised, but are still evolving. They do not satisfactorily identify students' potential and needs. A few students had their skills on entry identified as well below what they were capable of achieving. Where literacy and numeracy targets are identified for individual students, teachers and students have begun to record progress towards the targets after each teaching session. This development is very recent and is not yet standard practice.

41. Communication aspects of the programme meet students' needs well, but the literacy and numeracy elements of programmes do not meet the needs all students. Practical numeracy skills have traditionally formed part of students' programmes, but literacy teaching has only recently been introduced and is limited in scope. On some programmes, targets are not set. Students have no access to activities or resources to reinforce their skills outside course times. There are no arrangements to respond to students' requests for additional help with reading.

42. Support for students is generally satisfactory. Skilled management of behaviour by staff minimises distractions and allows students to maximise their progress. There is insufficient access to counselling and therapy services for students with greater needs. Tutorials have recently become more frequent, but are not always effectively organised for the benefit of students. Arrangements for diagnosing and working with students with dyslexia are inadequate.

Leadership and management

43. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. Management of the development of communication skills is effective, but strategic development of literacy and numeracy across the college is slow. The college is in the process of increasing management resources to support development. Quality assurance systems have not identified weaknesses in teaching and learning during lesson observations. The college takes a strong and active stance on counteracting stereotyping of disability. It works hard to maximise employment opportunities for people with disabilities. Other equal opportunities issues, such as race and gender, have a lower profile. Staff were involved in the self-assessment report, but it did not identify the weaknesses of this area.