



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE



OFFICE FOR STANDARDS
IN EDUCATION

Inspection Report

Lufton Manor College of Further Education

Dates of Inspection: 1–4 July 2002

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Basic information about the college

Name of college:	Lufton Manor College of Further Education
Type of college:	Independent specialist residential
Principal:	Rupert Elliott
Address of college:	Lufton Manor College of Further Education Lufton Yeovil Somerset BA22 8ST
Telephone number:	01935 403120
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Chair of governors/trustees:	Linda Cooper
Unique reference number:	15432
Name of reporting inspector:	Isabella Jobson
Dates of inspection:	1–4 July 2002

Part A: Summary

Information about the college

Lufton Manor is one of the three specialist colleges that together form Mencap National College. The other two colleges are Dilston College in Northumberland and Pengwern College of Further Education in North Wales. The Royal Mencap Society has charitable status, registered in 1969, and operates a limited company. All the colleges offer the Mencap Essential Skills Award as their curriculum framework, operate within the same administrative framework, and have the same principles and objectives. Lufton Manor offers full-time residential and day education for students aged 16–25 years with learning disabilities.

The college is located on two rural sites on the outskirts of Yeovil at Lufton Manor and at Manor Farm. The residential provision on both main sites provides semi-supported living accommodation for students. The college has a house in the local community, which provides independent accommodation for five students. The college recruits nationally. In the last two years, the college has accepted students with more severe learning difficulties. Of the 74 students at the college, 71 have the educational and training element of their provision funded by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). There are three day students. Some 93% of the students are aged 19 years and above. Two thirds of the students are male. The college community includes students who have Down's syndrome, autistic spectrum disorder, epilepsy, speech and communication difficulties, and severe learning difficulties.

The primary aim of the college is to 'prepare students for their next step in their lives'. This aim is developed at the college for the benefit of all students and is expressed within the extended curriculum. Staff are committed to the college's aim and are very successful in helping their students to develop their independence.

All students follow the Essential Skills Award as their curriculum framework which consists of four elements: daily living skills; personal care and presentation; community and leisure; and practical and vocational skills. This entry level award is divided into introductory levels 1, 2 and 3. Level 3 can lead to level 1 of the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) framework. Learners may progress within a level or from one level to another. Some will be learning different skills at different levels. Students can attend a sport and community leisure course and a one-year first aid course at entry level at Yeovil College of Further Education. Students can also attend a ten-week beauty and care course at Strode College. In conjunction with Cannington College, students can gain a National Proficiency Test Council qualification in animal husbandry at entry level.

Activities on the college's 70 acres of land include pre-vocational training in small animal care, horticulture and grounds maintenance. A car-vaiting workshop, a café and a small garden centre are open to the public and provide the students with an actual working environment. Cannington Agricultural College's raptor and reptile house is located within Manor Farm where students from both colleges work together. Additionally, students are able to attend Yeovil and Strode colleges of further education for specific courses. The residential aspect has been designed to enhance the teaching elements of the extended curriculum, provide opportunities to consolidate some daytime learning, and to help students to develop their independence. A multi-disciplinary team supports the work of the college and provides a specialist contribution for assessment of individual students, intervention and staff training.

How effective is the college?

Inspectors judged the quality of education and training to be outstanding in vocational programmes, good in social and life skills, and satisfactory in literacy and numeracy. The standard of residential provision is high and students are well cared for and well supported. The main strengths and areas that should be improved are listed below:

Key strengths

- good teaching
- effective leadership
- good support and guidance
- good behavioural management
- successful integration of learning in educational and residential provision
- good achievements in vocational programmes, social and life skills, and communication
- good residential and vocational accommodation
- good attention to health and safety
- outstanding vocational provision.

What should be improved

- the recording and review of learning
- targets for literacy and numeracy
- the quality assurance procedures
- the integration of information and communications technology (ICT) within the curriculum.

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

Quality of provision in curriculum and occupational areas

The table below shows the 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), and very weak (5).

Area	Overall judgements about provision and comment
Literacy / numeracy and communication	Satisfactory. Teaching and learning is satisfactory. Most students develop good communication skills. There are good resources for students with complex communication difficulties. Students' individual literacy and numeracy targets are too general and are not well integrated into the wider curriculum.
Social and life skills	Good. Social and life skills are well co-ordinated and effectively managed. The residential programme provides effective real-life situations for the development of social and life skills. Students' achievements are impressive. Students' behaviour is well managed and students are effectively supported through the tutorial process.
Vocational programmes	Outstanding. Teaching is very good. Students' vocational skills are well developed in good, realistic working environments. The development of independent living skills is outstanding.

How well is the college led and managed?

Leadership and management are good. There has been effective management of change since the last inspection in May 1998. Strategic management and action planning are good. The college has developed a coherent curriculum framework. Its aims and values, which are very effectively shared with all staff, provide a supportive environment for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Most teaching is good. Quality assurance procedures were established in 2001, but have yet to be fully implemented. There is effective promotion of issues relating to equality of opportunity. Governors have a thorough understanding of the college and support its work effectively. Financial management is good and is kept under review by trustees. The college provides good value for money.

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

The college's response to educational and social inclusion is good. Its aims and values promote mutual respect and effective care for all members of the community. Since the last inspection, the college has extended its range to include provision for students with more complex learning difficulties. Staff are especially effective in the management of students with behavioural difficulties. They enable students to live and learn both in the college and among the local community. There are excellent links with Cannington Agricultural College. Policies relating to bullying and harassment are effectively communicated to and understood by staff and students.

How well are students and trainees guided and supported?

Guidance and support for students in the college and the residences are outstanding. The college successfully promotes the development of social and communication skills through coherent and well-communicated aims and objectives. There are good arrangements to induct the students into the college. The commitment and dedication of staff are recognised and valued by students, parents and advocates. Students' individual needs are identified and their learning plans take account of their prior experience. Students benefit from a weekly tutorial programme.

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

- many said 'everything'
- the staff and their support
- the wide range of activities and the good courses
- being kept busy
- the quality of the accommodation
- making friends
- the student council
- becoming independent and being given responsibility
- the farm and the animals
- learning is fun.

What they feel could be improved

- most said 'nothing'
- not doing the washing up.

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

Achievements and standards

1. There is no significant distinction between the achievements of students aged 16 to 18 and those over 19. All students experience a wide range of learning opportunities across the extended curriculum. These experiences, for example, running an organic café that is open to the public, are planned to ensure that, as far as possible, the students are able to achieve their individual learning goals in practical real-life situations. Where appropriate, students are able to achieve external accreditation, such as the certificate of achievement in oral skills and the basic food hygiene certificate. Pass rates on these courses are good.
2. Inspectors were unable to measure the college-wide achievements. The external accreditation framework for the curriculum was only piloted in 2001 and no data are yet available. Through its central recording procedure, the college collates and monitors individual students' progress, but the length of time between review and evaluation of the progress against targets is too long. In some cases, students' targets remain the same for too long. Individual programmes designed to meet the needs and interests of specific students are planned as an integral part of courses in daily living skills, personal care and presentation, community and leisure activities, and practical and vocational skills. Many students with significant additional learning and behavioural difficulties make exceptional progress in the development of both independent living and vocational skills whilst at the college.
3. Students develop good work-related skills in practical courses. For example, in animal care, the students check that the necessary standards for the health and well being of the animals are maintained and, in horticulture and catering, students produce items of a sufficiently high standard for them to be sold. Through focusing on specific practical tasks, the students learn to concentrate and to work efficiently without direct supervision. Performing arts in the extended curriculum provides students with the opportunity to gain confidence and skills in appropriate social interaction. Students successfully attend activities in the community leisure centres and in local hotels and restaurants where they further develop their independence and social and communication skills.
4. Work-experience placements within the college are available to all students as part of their individual programmes. They appreciate these placements which sometimes act as a bridge to supported work experience in the community. For example, a student who had started work in the college's café was at the time of the inspection on external work experience in a highly regarded hotel. However, too few students have the chance to take up external work placements. There are insufficient opportunities for such placements where students can apply skills and extend learning acquired in college.
5. All students benefit from the experience of supportive shared living in the residential households in the college. The students are effectively prepared for future involvement in the life of local communities. Planning and preparation enable some students to move successfully into semi-independent living accommodation in a community.

6. Retention rates are good. Many students stay at the college for three years. Students' progression to living in the community is good. Most students progress either to semi-supported or supported living arrangements on leaving the college. The students continue their learning in a range of settings, such as colleges of further education for catering and animal care courses, countryside courses as day students at Lufton Manor and supported work experience. College managers respond promptly to the analysis of data collected on students. For example, they have successfully addressed issues relating to punctuality and attendance.

Quality of teaching, training and learning

7. Teaching was good or better in 87% of lessons, satisfactory in 10% and unsatisfactory in 3%. The quality of teaching was consistently good in all curriculum areas. It was particularly effective in most vocational activities and in social and life skills lessons. Teaching in literacy and numeracy was satisfactory in most lessons and good or better in some. In the small number of lessons where the teaching was less effective, learners were over-supported and there were no clear literacy or numeracy targets.

8. Teachers create effective opportunities for learning. Lessons are well prepared. Planning is related to course criteria and to individual students' targets. Targets for literacy and numeracy are too general and do not contribute to lesson planning or assist in measuring individual progress. Although students worked effectively towards their goals, not all learners were aware of their specific targets. There are excellent working relationships between staff and students throughout all aspects of the college. Behaviour is very well managed. Students gain in self-confidence through the activities and develop good levels of concentration. They enjoy their work.

9. Teachers and support staff are knowledgeable and competent in their work with students with learning difficulties and with challenging behaviour. Tutors, therapists and craftspeople are well qualified. Half of the care and education staff are working towards a teaching qualification. Some teachers do not possess the skills to identify preferred individual learning styles or to plan differentiated activities. The college has recognised that insufficient staff are qualified to teach literacy and numeracy and is organising training programmes to enable staff to gain the necessary expertise. A range of specialist support services is available to students and includes medical and counselling services, behaviour management, and speech and language therapy. Therapy staff, including counsellors and speech therapists, are well qualified and support the personal development of the learners effectively.

10. Buildings and resources at both Lufton Manor and Manor Farm are maintained to a high standard. Excellent residential accommodation provides a suitable setting for developing the learners' social and life skills. The supported accommodation outside the college in the local community is outstanding. There are good facilities and resources to support the extended curriculum. The resources for the vocational programmes, in particular, assist in the development of work-related skills. However, some resources for horticulture are outdated. At the time of the inspection, ICT was not integrated into curriculum activities. The college was installing a range of ICT resources during the inspection.

11. Students and parents/carers receive good support and guidance before they apply to the college. Marketing materials are good. Pre-entry assessment is effectively designed to ensure that students can benefit from attending the college. The process includes: a five-day residential visit to the college; questionnaires for parents/carers; and an analysis of school reports. Comprehensive assessments of individual communication needs are analysed and contribute to the student's individual learning plan. Initial assessment of literacy and numeracy is not included in students' pre-entry assessment.

12. Progress made towards individual targets is recorded after each lesson. Some recording of progress is insufficiently detailed and does not describe students' achievements. Individual students' progress is analysed and recorded for reviews. However, as changes to individual learning plans only occur at reviews, the significant length of time between reviews means that some students will have progressed further than their current targets. Daily communication between staff is good. Individual targets are sent to parents each half term so that they have the chance to comment on the student's progress.

13. The college offers a comprehensive curriculum that covers evening activities and daily living in the residential households. Individual programmes enable students to build on their previous experience and to make progress. The curriculum has an integrated approach to care and education, and can provide appropriate content and approach for every student. Each has an individual timetable linked to his or her learning plan. The vocational programmes offer a range of experiences that meets the needs of students. In particular, the animal care, horticulture and car maintenance programmes offer effective, work-related opportunities. Students progressing between levels 2 to 3 of the curriculum lack opportunities to extend their learning in community-based work experience. There are good links within the community. Surveys report high levels of satisfaction among students and their parents.

14. Individual learning support and care needs are accurately assessed and students receive effective additional support for studies and daily living. The college has an inclusive approach. For example, the college charter and all notices are in signs and symbols. Students have immediate access to the principal on the presentation of a pre-prepared card that identifies their request. Tutorials are held weekly and tutors help students to achieve their personal goals. There is swift and effective response from the staff to issues raised in tutorials.

15. Transition arrangements for students are good. A programme is ready for all students one year before they plan to leave. Weekly timetabled sessions are built into programmes to ensure students are well prepared for leaving the college. There are extensive links with outside agencies. Connexions Somerset provides a personal advisor for two days a week to advise students on the opportunities for progression after college. National Mencap provides networks that link the students into services in their local communities.

16. Personal support for students is outstanding. Guidance and support arrangements are sensitive to issues of equal opportunity and cultural diversity. Policies and procedures are well documented and disseminated to students and college staff. Students use total communication, which includes the use of signs, symbols and voice. Staff and student training is available. Insufficient staff have undertaken or gained specialist qualifications to enable all students' communication needs to be fully met.

Leadership and management

17. Leadership and management are good. Senior managers give the college a clear sense of direction. The mission and values of the college are clearly described in its documents and publicity materials. Strategic and operational planning is rigorous and involves a close working relationship with governors and trustees, and the other two colleges which, together with Lufton Manor, constitute the Mencap National College. The senior management of the college has been restructured and substantial changes to working practices have been implemented since the last inspection. Staff fully understand these changes and support the aims and values of the college. The principal and senior management team have instigated significant improvements in the last two years since their recruitment. For example, the development of the tutors' role and flexible shift patterns have improved the college's capacity to meet students' individual needs and to teach the new curriculum implemented in 2001.

18. Communication across the college is good. There are clear procedures for recording and reporting the results of meetings. The self-assessment process, implemented in 2001, is evaluative in its assessment of the key strengths and weaknesses of the college. Although, staff are involved in the process, some remain unclear about quality assurance activities and their relevance to the process of achieving continuous improvement. Students are included in college procedures. The college responds positively to students' feedback and takes account of their views in subsequent planning and development.

19. There are some good arrangements for assuring the quality of teaching and learning. The college has employed consultants to train observers, drawn from college staff, and has completed one set of observations. Grading was rigorous. Grades were lower than those awarded by inspectors. Quality assurance procedures have yet to be fully implemented. They do not include a description of how a particular activity should be carried out or the standard to be reached. For example, students' files contain a number of shortcomings, but there is no system to monitor the contents or assure the quality of the files. Operational managers and the members of the senior management team have good access to data about students and college finances, which they use effectively.

20. Estate management and use of the site are good. The working placements provided for its students are well managed. Good links have been made with a local college to develop provision for animal care and horticulture. There is a written agreement outlining each partner's responsibility. Health and safety procedures are good and students are confident in their use of equipment. Formal risk assessments across all students' activities are not comprehensive. The Mencap National College has addressed this issue and new procedures are being implemented.

21. There is a high level of awareness in the college on issues relating to stereotyping, race, sexual orientation and gender. Policies and procedures agreed by The Royal Mencap Society have been fully implemented. Complaints and grievance procedures ensure that effective and prompt action is taken when necessary.

22. The college is committed to developing staff skills and expertise. The aims that determine staff development activities are clearly linked to the strategic plan. There has been significant in-house staff training on the management of change; it focused on the efficient and flexible use of staff. At the time of the inspection, the college was supporting 16 staff in their pursuit of a range of teaching qualifications. There is a new staff appraisal system, however, it was too early to assess the impact of appraisal on the quality of provision at the time of the inspection.

23. Performance indicators are linked to the strategic plans and demanding targets are set. The Royal Mencap Society and the Mencap National College board of governors have to approve all targets and strategic plans. Governors and trustees are well informed about the college. Effective systems enable governors to evaluate the work of the college and to monitor the strategic development plans. The trustees fulfil their duty appropriately under charity law. Financial management and procedures are good. There is consistent use of best value practices and good implementation of cost-effective measures.

Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas

Literacy / numeracy and communication

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

Strengths

- practical opportunities for application of literacy and numeracy skills
- effective development of communication skills.

Weaknesses

- inadequate target setting for literacy and numeracy
- inadequate monitoring of students' progress.

Scope of provision

24. Literacy and numeracy are taught through the adult pre-entry curriculum for literacy and numeracy, and integrated into the Essential Skills Award at introductory levels 1, 2 and 3. A small number of students work at entry level and attend courses at Yeovil College of Further Education. Assessments in spoken English are accredited through the English Speaking Board. Literacy and numeracy skills are emphasised within all aspects of vocational, residential and community learning across the curriculum. Every opportunity is taken to develop these skills across both college sites, on visits to Yeovil town centre and in the local community. Students improve their skills through vocational training whether it is in animal care or horticulture, during grounds maintenance or car valeting, or while working in the maintenance workshop or in the Manor Farm Café, a newly-equipped training kitchen. Literacy and numeracy are also effectively promoted across a wide range of extra-curricular activities that includes army cadets, hairdressing and beauty, and total communication. A course in total communication, which includes the use of signs, symbols and voice to enhance communication, is taken by both students and staff, and is accredited through Somerset Total Communication.

Achievement and standards

25. All students make good progress in the development of their communication skills. The initial assessment of these skills contributes effectively to the planning of their learning. The speech and language therapist supports staff well by promoting specific communication strategies for individual learners in lessons. All students have suitably differentiated communication targets, which are identified in their individual learning plans. They show very good attainment in communication and use their skills well in both familiar and new contexts. They attend regularly and are punctual for lessons. Students also work enthusiastically and are keen to make progress in developing their literacy and numeracy skills across many areas of the curriculum. A literacy and numeracy framework based on the national standards for adults is used. All students have individual learning plans. However, the setting of targets for literacy and numeracy is inadequate. Targets are too general and do not influence lesson planning effectively. The initial assessment process for literacy and numeracy skills is weak.

Quality of education and training

26. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. In the more effective lessons, teachers provide good opportunities for students to apply their literacy and numeracy skills while working on their daily living skills. In one residence, students were using written job rotas for planning cleaning and washing tasks. Students working in the training café use numerical skills well for the preparation of food. They were able to count out place settings and cutlery, and handle money at the counter. In animal care, students learn to allocate the right amount of feed to livestock. Although the students' residencies offer good opportunities to practice the application of acquired literacy and numeracy skills, teachers do not always provide an environment for reflecting on and improving learning.

27. Students are keen, well motivated, enjoy their work and take pride in their accomplishments. They work well with each other and on their own. There are good, positive and productive working relationships between staff and students. In one session, the tutor and support staff worked together with a group of students with speech and language difficulties to develop their communication skills during a visit to the town. Students were able to use sign language to communicate the names of the library, post office and bank, and to purchase items in a café. Throughout the inspection they were successful in making appropriate social responses in a range of contexts.

28. In less effective lessons, the teaching of literacy and numeracy is uncoordinated and insufficiently differentiated. Students were not given opportunities to demonstrate their skills. Some teaching materials were child-focused and inappropriate for adult students; others were not sufficiently differentiated to meet the individual needs of the students.

29. Resources for literacy and numeracy are good in all areas of the curriculum. In horticulture, the development of an imaginative card system for targeting specific literacy and numeracy skills was being used well. The college displays symbol and text-based notices around the site effectively. In one residence, students value a colour-coded chart, which provides a good guide to the correct sequence for bathing. There are insufficient resources to enable students to develop their ICT skills at the college. At the time of the inspection, the college was installing computers with specialist access devices and establishing a dedicated ICT space in the main hall.

Leadership and management

30. Literacy and numeracy is line managed by a vice-principal through operational managers and basic skills champions. The structures for implementing and driving literacy and numeracy development throughout the curriculum have been developed this year and are not yet fully implemented. The development plan and self-assessment processes effectively identify weaknesses. A plan to target basic skills development is being implemented; key responsibilities have been allocated and deadlines established. Staff development for the teaching of literacy and numeracy was inadequate at the time of the inspection. This weakness was being addressed through the national training programme and an intensive in-house staff development programme.

Social and life skills

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

Strengths

- good achievement in social and life skills
- a well-designed life skills programme
- outstanding integration of education and care across the extended curriculum.

Weaknesses

- a lack of rigour in monitoring and assessment.

Scope of provision

31. The social and life skills programme is an integral part of the college's extended curriculum. It is designed to help students to develop their skills and confidence to live as independent an adult life as possible. Social and life skills are developed through the residential programme and through elements of the curriculum that include: daily living skills; personal care and presentation; community and leisure opportunities; and practical and vocational skills. Activities include: gardening; health and fitness; beauty and relaxation; creative and visual arts; army cadets group; and total communications.

Achievements and standards

32. Students' achievement of social and life skills is very good. The programme encourages students to take responsibility for organising themselves and to apply their skills effectively in a range of real-life situations. Students make significant progress at the college. They achieve high standards of personal care, gain considerably in self-confidence and participate actively and enthusiastically in a wide range of enrichment activities. Furthermore, there has been a significant decrease of 68% over the last two years of incidents in challenging behaviour. Students display considerable ability in demonstrating a range of skills related to the curriculum and are able to move into semi-independent residential accommodation as their confidence, and social and life skills increase. The standard of students' work is high and the recording of their achievements is suitably detailed. However, there is insufficient rigour in the review of targets. Insufficient demands are made on a small number of learners. Students are very happy at the college, enjoy learning and display high levels of concentration and motivation. They attend lessons regularly and are punctual.

Quality of education and training

33. Teaching was good or better in all of the lessons observed. Lesson planning is based on individual students' needs and the priorities that have been developed for them following a comprehensive baseline assessment and compilation of individual pen portraits. Learning is well managed. Teachers and learning support staff are skilful in developing students' social and life skills. In a few lessons, teachers spent too little time at the beginning of lessons on discussion of learning goals. Staff approach challenging behaviour firmly and with sensitivity. Students are very aware of their own social skills and understand how they are learning to develop them. They frequently refer to their own targets and what they are trying to achieve within a lesson. Students are encouraged to learn from their failures as well as their successes. They approach tasks with enthusiasm and motivation. The wide range of activities within the residential settings is used effectively by staff to both encourage high standards of personal care and as opportunities to develop a wider range of social and life skills. For example, during a daily living skills session, the weekly personal allowance banking activity is extended into a numeracy activity. This integration of the care and education agenda is extremely successful in harnessing activities which develop essential life skills whilst extending learning and knowledge.

34. The residential accommodation is furnished to a high standard and provides a safe and relevant context for learning. Students move into more independent living accommodation as their social and life skills develop. The addition of accommodation in the local community during 2001 provides a residence for students who require minimal support. It offers preparation for full entry into living independently within a community and is much valued by students. Posters and wall displays, using both symbols and writing, within the residential settings are used to extend learning and highlight important health and safety issues. At the time of the inspection, there were few ICT resources within the college to support the development of life skills. Good use is made of local community facilities to develop social and life skills. Students are encouraged to mix independently with the wide range of people that they meet during these visits. Students' interactions in these settings are comfortable and promote the development of self-esteem and independence. There is good teamwork amongst teachers and learning support staff who share and exchange care and education roles to good effect. Students value the personal support and guidance they receive. There is good liaison between key workers and other staff, close monitoring supervision of on-going needs and effective response to issues that require attention.

35. There is a lack of rigour in the monitoring and assessment of learning. Although efforts and achievements are praised and areas for improvements carefully discussed with students, the recording of learning within each lesson is often only descriptive. There is no evaluation of teaching or learning outcomes. In many lesson plans, teachers do not link activities to learning objectives. As a result, the outcomes are often confused and do not indicate the level of students' performance. For example, 'peeling the potato' is noted as an outcome, whereas comments on how well the student listened in order to perform this activity are omitted. Learning across the extended curriculum is not sufficiently integrated into individual learning plans. In a few lessons, teachers' use of questions is weak and does not allow students to rehearse what they have learnt.

Leadership and management

36. A new care and education strategy, which aims to integrate personal care and living skills with the education programme, has been established under the new management team. The management of this change has been successful. The college now provides an effective programme of activities for students as part of a range of opportunities designed to develop more independent living. Social and life skills are essential components of this strategy. All staff are effectively involved in developing social and life skills, whatever the nature of their contact with students. These roles are clearly understood by staff and are well managed.

Vocational programmes

Overall provision in this area is **outstanding (Grade 1)**.

Strengths

- very good teaching
- realistic working environments
- very effective development of students' independence
- high levels of students' achievement in work-related skills.

Weaknesses

- inadequate recording of achievements.

Scope of provision

37. The college offers a wide range of vocational programmes including care of small animals, a car valeting service, an organic café, and a garden centre open to the public in the college grounds. Students gain credits towards the Essential Skills Award through the practical and vocational element of the curriculum framework. The Essential Skills Award is an entry level award, divided into levels 1, 2 and 3. Level 3 can lead to level 1 of the NVQ framework. Learners may progress within a level or from one level to another. Some will be learning different skills at different levels. National Skills Profiles Oxford and Cambridge and Royal Society of Arts (OCR) accredit a countryside studies course for day students. The college offers a National Proficiency Test Council award in animal husbandry at entry level in conjunction with Cannington College. Students can undertake vocational tasters in each of the areas and can then specialise if appropriate. The provision is supported by internal work placements, for example on the farm, and in the Lufton Manor kitchen.

Achievement and standards

38. Students' achievement in developing work-related skills is very good. The development of independence is outstanding in relation to practical competence, problem solving and increased ability to seek support appropriately. In one lesson, a student pointed out to the tutor that the cupboard was locked, whereas previously she would have waited for support. All students make significant gains in relation to their initial assessments and against their individual learning plans. Students work to a high standard of vocational competence. Achievement on work experience is very good. Some students are able to make the transition to further training or sheltered employment. Too few students have the opportunity to experience external work placements.

Quality of education and training

39. Teaching is very good. All lessons observed were good or better, and 80% were very good or excellent. Students are skilfully guided into working collaboratively; there were many instances of students working at essential skills level 2 and 3, supporting level 1 students. Students are highly motivated, remain on task and are enthusiastic about their learning. Many students are able to explain to others the activity they are engaged on, and some are very competent in utilising technical knowledge about health and safety. For example, in a catering lesson, a student knew the consequence of storing recently cooked food incorrectly. Tutors promote learning and independence through highly effective questioning, guidance and feedback about individual students' progress. In the most effective lessons, fresh learning is always related to previous learning and to future targets. Activities are highly appropriate for the learners and the planning and teaching reflect a good understanding of the students' needs. Tutors set appropriate and suitably challenging goals in relation to behavioural targets.

40. The college has good-quality, realistic working environments and a range of resources to help students to develop functional, pre-vocational and vocational skills. For example, the provision of four identical lawn mowers facilitates group sessions on their safe use and enables students to always use a machine with which they are familiar. Students' timetables and vocational areas are changed in response to students' wishes or needs. Well-judged changes in work experience to ensure good use of the students' abilities have provided greater and more satisfying challenges for some students.

41. Procedures for recording learning are under constant review to secure their maximum effectiveness. Schemes of work are broken down into vocational tasks and key steps, and learning is recorded against each of these elements. However, this breakdown is not included in the learners' individual targets nor is the recorded information readily accessible. Recording of progress on vocational courses does not fully capture the significant achievements of students.

Leadership and management

42. Curriculum management in the vocational areas is very good. All staff are aware of and enthusiastic about the very significant contribution this area of learning makes to student achievement. There are regular and well-minuted meetings of staff; evidence is kept of actions addressed and completed. There are good professional relationships with line managers and senior managers.

Notes

