



ADULT LEARNING  
INSPECTORATE



## St.Elizabeth's College

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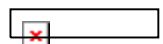
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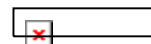
**Basic information about the college**



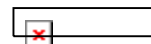
Name of college:	St.Elizabeth's College
Type of college:	Independent residential specialist
Principal:	Frank Boyle
Address of college:	Much Haddam Hertfordshire SG10 6EW
Telephone number:	01279 844423
Fax number:	01279 842918
Chair of governors:	Sister Veronica Hagan
Registered charity number	3492921
Name of reporting inspector:	Gill Reay HMI
Dates of inspection:	6-10 June 2005

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

## Part A: Summary



### Information about the college



The St.Elizabeth's at Much Hadham, near Bishop's Stortford in East Hertfordshire, was founded in 1903 by an order of Catholic sisters known as The Daughters of the Cross of Liège. It was originally established as a residential school for children with epilepsy but soon after its foundation a residential home for adults with epilepsy was also created on the site. Currently St. Elizabeth's centre comprises a college for 12 Learning and Skills Council day students aged between 18 and 25, a school for pupils aged five to 19 years of age, a residential home for 104 residents, a day centre and social enterprises in horticulture, ceramics, art and furniture refurbishment.

The mission statement of St. Elizabeth's College is 'by the unquestioning expression of God's love we will work together to bring about the personal development of each individual'. St.Elizabeth's centre is a charitable trust managed by a board of trustees.

### Context for the establishment of St. Elizabeth's college

In 2002/03 the newly appointed Chief Executive Officer completed a comprehensive strategic review of all provision in the trust. The review challenged the purposes of St. Elizabeth's school, St. Elizabeth's home and the core services of the centre.

A dialogue was established with stakeholders whose key reference point was the white paper 'Valuing People' (2001) and its core principles of choice, independence, rights and inclusion. The outcomes of the review are radical and wide ranging.

For the residents of St. Elizabeth's home the changes included:

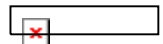
- o offering a choice of lifestyles including community tenancies at offside locations

- the creation of a domiciliary care agency to support the new lifestyles
- establishing a network of social enterprises offering supported employment
- the establishment of a learning culture to promote lifelong learning.

For St. Elizabeth's school the challenge was to provide transition programmes to prepare young people for adult lifestyles with an emphasis on aspiring to the highest level of independent living. As a result St. Elizabeth's college was established and included an innovatory model involving partnership arrangements with housing associations, social and health services. The college programmes commenced their pilot phase in September 2004.

The key feature of the St. Elizabeth's college is that it takes the assessed needs of individual students and shares the funding responsibility of health, care and education between the relevant agencies. It thereby encourages holistic person centred planning by the diversity of agencies that touch upon students' lives.

#### **How effective is the college?**



Overall, the college provides satisfactory or better teaching and a good range of opportunities for learning on the campus for its students. The college provides good realistic work settings through social enterprises. Pre-entry, initial and baseline assessments are good as is personal support for students. The monitoring and recording of students' progress is good as is documentation of annual reviews. Standards of students' work are good in practical activities and in the development of personal and social skills. The embedding of literacy and numeracy across the curriculum is underdeveloped.

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

#### ***Key strengths***

- good development of personal and social skills
- good teaching of practical activities
- comprehensive assessment

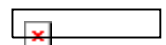
- good recording and monitoring of progress
- innovative external partnerships
- support and commitment of trustees
- strong strategic vision.

***What should be improved***

- the adequacy of staff qualifications
- therapeutic specialist input to the curriculum
- balance in the curriculum
- the promotion of equality and diversity
- embedding of literacy and numeracy in the curriculum.

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

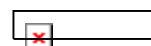
**How well is the college led and managed?**



Leadership and management are satisfactory. The college opened in September 2004. Although the college has not yet completed a full year of operation good monitoring and recording of students' progress demonstrates good achievement of individual learning goals.. The vision and strategic direction of the college are well understood by trustees and staff and are actively promoted by senior

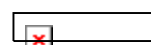
functions include human resource management, estate and financial management, staff development and training. All staff place a strong emphasis on valuing students and supporting their achievements. The observation of teaching has been undertaken by the principal of the college and grades awarded match those of inspectors. Quality assurance arrangements are new, rigorous and well documented but have not yet been evaluated over time. All staff contributed to the self-assessment process and the resulting report was self-critical and identified all issues raised by inspectors. Middle managers have not yet fully developed operational roles. Duties under the Special Educational Needs Disability Act (SENDA) 2001 have only recently been fulfilled and the college does not yet meet its duties under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act (2000). Financial management is good and the college provides value for money.

### **To what extent is the college educationally and socially inclusive?**



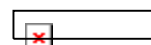
The college's response to educational and social inclusion is unsatisfactory. Regular and easy access to the local community is limited because of the college's geographical location for example there is only one public bus per week from the college to the local town. There is also limited social inclusion into college activities for the five students living in the residential care home. Literacy and numeracy provision is underdeveloped. The college responds effectively to incidents of bullying and harassment and there is good reporting of incidents to the Learning and Skills Council and the Catholic Organisation for the Protection of Vulnerable Adults. The college has recently become compliant with SENDA but is not yet compliant with the Race Relations Act. There is insufficient promotion of equality and diversity in the curriculum. Although staff have undertaken training in equality and diversity it has yet to impact in the classroom. The centre provides good resources for realistic work placements but planning to use these facilities is underdeveloped.

### **How well are students and trainees guided and supported?**



The college provides a satisfactory level of support and guidance for its students. Staff know the students well and are concerned to work together for the best interests of the students. The tutorial system is effective in supporting students' personal and social development and linking the different aspects of the individual student programmes. There are good arrangements at pre-entry and induction stages to assist students' transition into the college. Therapists at the centre make a valuable contribution to the initial assessment. However, the absence of specialist psychology, speech, language and physiotherapy contributions into the curriculum is a significant weakness. Parents value the constructive on-going contact they have with college. Links with the local Connexions service are good.

### **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***

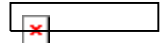
- bowling
- computers
- Ashvale - The gardening centre
- swimming
- helping other people
- sports
- watching video's
- the boat trip
- working together
- shopping
- horse riding.

***What they feel could be improved***

- sessions are a bit frantic
- a lot of noise

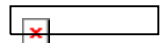
- current affairs.

## Other information

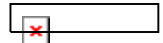


The college inspection report will normally be published 12 working weeks after the inspection. Once published, the college has two months in which to prepare its post inspection action plan and submit it to the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC). The college's action plan must show what action 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 should send to Ofsted only action plans from colleges that have been judged inadequate or have been awarded a grade 4 or 5 for curriculum provision, work-based learning and/or leadership and management.

## Part B: The college as a whole

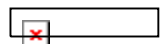


### Scope of Provision



1. Students at St. Elizabeth's college are aged 18 to 25. There are 12 students attending the college as day students funded on the Learning and Skills Council matrix. Seven students live as tenants with domiciliary care and specialist medical costs funded by their home social services. Tenants live in a bungalow, Jubilee House in the grounds of the St. Elizabeth centre. Five students live in residential provision at St. Elizabeth's home. The gender balance is six male and six female students. There are no students from minority ethnic backgrounds. Students follow an essential skills award that consists of four elements: daily living skills; personal care and presentation; community and leisure; and practical and vocational skills. Each element can be awarded at three levels. In addition students access social enterprises in horticulture, art, ceramics and furniture refurbishment. Jubilee House is also used extensively to teach independent living skills.

### Achievement and standards



2. Rates of retention are high at 96%, and in line with other specialist colleges. Attendance at 83 % is low and although punctuality is monitored there is insufficient attention given to the impact of poor punctuality on students' programmes.

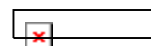
3. Standards of students' work as seen in their files are satisfactory and appropriate to their level of ability. Students' achieve a good standard of work in practical settings and in the development of personal and social skills.

4. Students at the end of their first year have achieved their short and medium-term primary learning goals. However, some targets for the more able students lack challenge and the college has not yet developed an appropriate range of qualifications to meet the needs of these students. This is acknowledged in the college's self-assessment report and action plans are in place to resolve the issue. The achievement of learning goals are recorded through individual learning plans and students are supported in negotiating these goals through discussions with their key workers.

5. Although this is the first year of operation for the college, annual reviews clearly demonstrate students' achievement throughout the year. Progress is consistently tracked and recorded across all curriculum areas. Tutors hold fortnightly meetings to review progress that is then recorded in individual learning plans. Behaviour plans are consistently applied by all staff.

6. The extended curriculum is used well to support the achievement of students' individual targets. However, students in the residential home are not always able to access these activities.

### Quality of teaching, training and learning



7. The majority of teaching is satisfactory or better and is above national average for specialist colleges. In the best lessons students learn through a variety of practical activities that offer them opportunities to move towards a more independent lifestyle. Students are encouraged to make choices and to think for themselves.

8. In a social enterprise lesson students learn how to produce pottery of a very high standard that is then exhibited in galleries and sold on to the public. In a lesson that focused on the planning of a social event students were using the internet to download photographs of the characters in a film. They then were given a budget to use in the centre's second hand clothing shop to buy clothes to be used when dressing up as these characters. They have produced flags of various nationalities and masks to be given out to people at the event.

9. The development of social and personal skills is good. Staff are very supportive of students' needs and use a well-managed whole team approach to further students' development care staff and curriculum tutors work well together. Job descriptions for the differing roles of care and curriculum staff are clear however at an operational level their deployment lacks clarity.

10. There is a very good use of regularly reviewed and updated relevant key targets in individual development plans that are used throughout the twenty four hour curriculum for students in tenanted accommodation. However in some cases students are not fully aware of their targets and they are not broken down into sufficient detail to match the needs of a particular lesson. For example an individual target was to suggest simple solutions to basic problems but this was not carried over into the specific objectives for the lesson. This detailed an activity to be carried out, crushing cans for the recycling project, rather than skills to be learned.

11. In the less successful lessons there is insufficient pace and variety to hold the students' interest for example when carrying out home management skills in the living areas. Some lessons are too long for the activities involved and fail to hold the students' interest. Some lessons do not take sufficient account of students' individual needs. Group lessons do not provide enough individually planned activities to challenge the more able or to provide alternative activities for those students who have a short attention span. Teaching methods and materials do not actively promote equality of opportunity.

12. The integration of literacy and numeracy is under-developed. Although students have targets for improvement they are insufficiently detailed. Not all staff are aware of the need to embed literacy and numeracy throughout the curriculum. However the development of students' oral communication



skills is carried out effectively.

13. Staff are enthusiastic and knowledgeable about their students. They are encouraged, and eager, to undertake initial teaching and care qualifications and professional development. For example, tutors are enrolled on a variety of qualifications such as, OCR level 3 further education teaching assistant accreditation, OCR level 4 further education teacher accreditation and national vocational qualifications level 2, 3 and 4 in care. However, many staff do not currently hold a relevant teaching, care or specialist qualification. Recruitment strategies have focused on employing staff who share the college's mission and vision and tried to provide them with training and qualification opportunities. This strategy is beginning to be effective but there are currently insufficient numbers of staff with specialist and literacy and numeracy qualifications. This is acknowledged in the self-assessment report. Staff development and training opportunities are extensive and well managed by the training section of the centre and linked to supervision and appraisal. For example all staff undertake a two week induction programme that provides a sound introduction to the college.

14. The residential accommodation comprises a large bungalow in the grounds of the campus that is attractive, well-maintained and homely. The residence is used as a teaching resource and provides satisfactory facilities for students to develop a wide range of daily living skills, interpersonal skills and general food hygiene. The social enterprises related to horticulture, art and woodwork are well resourced and tasks undertaken are realistic and relevant to targets set for students. Work experience placements are currently being developed, for example two students have business administration placements with the college's training department. In partnership with a housing association the college is currently in the final stages of building a 20 bedded on-site tenanted accommodation. This accommodation is of a very high standard and it is proposed that students move into them in September 2005. Planning permission has been approved for a further 12 off-site tenancies in Bishop's Stortford and are planned to be completed in December 2006.

15. Teaching and learning resources are satisfactory. There is a well resourced learning centre where students have access to computers and appropriate learning materials. There is also a wide range of assistive technology aids available but there is no up-to-date centralised record of the location of these items. The college's information and communications technology (ICT) strategy has recently been approved by the board of trustees. It is thorough, fully costed and its implementation is being project managed by an external consultant.

16. Pre-entry, initial and baseline assessments are thorough and provide a sound basis to identify individual learning goals. The college carries out a comprehensive review of information provided by the students, their parents, carers, previous placements, specialist reports and a one day assessment at the college. From this process, a baseline assessment is developed, and learning targets are devised. During the first six weeks, assessment continues and additional information is used to develop the baseline assessment. At the end of the six-week assessment period the student's individual learning plan is finalised. These plans provide a comprehensive range of learning goals that are used effectively to prioritise and measure individual students' progress. The systems to track and record students' progress against these individual goals are thorough. Tutors' evaluation of lessons is very detailed and provides information that is used to contribute to regular fortnightly assessment meetings where students' progress is reviewed and evaluated. Any additional achievements that students make are captured by staff and recorded centrally in individual students' files.

17. Students' progress is formally reported each term. The annual review produced at the end of the third term provides clear evidence of the progress that students have made. Some achievement of more able students is limited by the lack of access to appropriate awards. This issue has been identified in the college's self-assessment report and actions put in place to address the issue.

18. The key focus of the programme is to support students who have aspirations to move to supported independent living. The programme is based on the key principles of 'Valuing People', rights, choices, independence and inclusion. Use of a tenancy agreement as the basis for promoting the development of the knowledge skills and experience required for supported independent living is innovative. However, the college's formal teaching and learning timetable is insufficiently flexible to support the aspirations of the philosophy of a seamless provision of learning and living. This is

recognised by the college. Although the curriculum is designed to meet the needs of students at different levels of ability, in whole group lessons students are working on similar tasks at similar levels. Overall the implementation of the curriculum does not provide sufficient challenge for more able students.

19. The social enterprise facilities in art, horticulture and woodwork provide a valuable opportunity for the college students to develop skills for a supported independent lifestyle. However, during this first year, inadequate analysis of students' readiness to take part in the available activities has led to limited use for some students. In the self-assessment action plan the college correctly states that the location of St.Elizabeth's centre in a rural area is not ideal for developing programmes aimed at social inclusion. Whilst the model being developed strongly supports the preparation for more independent lifestyles there is a need to include some community-based provision prior to transition to the students' home community. Students who are tenants are encouraged to contribute ideas for enrichment and leisure activities during the evening and at weekends. A planned production of the musical *Grease* bringing together the college, school and the care home is the idea of a student who is taking a key role in directing the production. The college uses social and leisure activities well to help students develop self-esteem and confidence and to develop respect for each other. However, there is restricted access to enrichment and leisure activities for students who are residents in the centre's care provision. The promotion of equality, diversity and celebration of cultural diversity is not yet adequately included in programmes of learning although informal activities in the enrichment curriculum such as a demonstration of Indian dancing has been enjoyed by students.

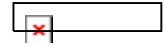
20. Support and guidance for students in the college is satisfactory overall. Although the Christian principles of love, dignity and respect have been carried over into the new college the recruitment, assessment, support and guidance of students is focused on student need regardless of religious, cultural or ethnic background. Staff know the students well and are concerned to work together for the best interests of the students. Information about tenanted students is effectively shared as a result of the dual role of independence tutors involvement in both residential accommodation and associated activities and classroom activities. Parents/carers are positive about the interview and pre-placement process as well as the constructive on going contact they have with college staff regarding the welfare of their sons and daughters.

21. Although attendance and punctuality at timetabled lessons is monitored the requirement for students to be in a lesson as it commences is unclear, as an activity taking place in the tenanted accommodation may be judged to take preference to the planned lesson. The induction process is well managed and helps students to make a positive move into the adult environment of the college. Tutorials are effective in supporting students' personal and social development and linking the different aspects of individual student programmes. The self-assessment report recognises that the key worker tutorials need to be more adequately recorded. Individual risk assessments satisfactorily identify potential hazards and activities to reduce risks.

22. Although therapists practising at the centre take part in the initial assessment of prospective students and provide training to college staff, the absence of specialist psychologist, speech and language and physiotherapists who deliver direct services and training to individual college students is a significant weakness. The self- assessment report states that the services of a clinical psychologist needs to be secured for those learners with complex problems. Parents interviewed during the inspection, whilst complimentary about the college overall expressed concern at the lack of specialist support available

23. The annual review is well managed and provides a sound basis on which to plan student progression. Careers advice and guidance is provided by the local Connexions service. The local personal advisor works productively with colleagues from students home Connexions services to support student progress and plan potential progression. The college has adopted the Hertfordshire Vulnerable Adults Policy as a means of monitoring and managing potentially abusive situations. Critical incidents are reported to the Learning and Skills Council and the Catholic Organisation for Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults in a clear and timely manner.

## Leadership and management



24. Leadership and Management are satisfactory. The college opened in September 2004 is in its pilot phase and has not yet completed a full year of operation. The project to develop the college emerged from discussions with parents, Connexions personal advisors and other stakeholders during a strategic review of St.Elizabeth's centre provision. The final plan to create a model of education and care required the creation of a registered domiciliary care agency. The college has worked in a productive partnership with two housing associations to create St. Elizabeth's college. The central services provided by the centre are good in finance, human resource management, estate management, staff development and training. They provide well-established, efficient and effective key services to support the development of the college. In the setting up of the college one third of staff were recruited from other St. Elizabeth's centre services such as the school and care home.

25. The vision and mission of the college are well understood by trustees and staff and are actively promoted by senior managers. The professional skills of trustees have been used to support key aspects of the strategic development of the college. The senior management team work well together and are respected by other college staff. Staff morale is high and communication within the college is good. The St. Elizabeth's centre strategic review and business plan incorporates the college strategic plan. The college has not yet developed operational plans. However, the detailed action plan developed from the self-assessment report provides an effective planning document in this first year of the college's operation. The action plan has clear targets for development with clear identification of costs.

26. The self-assessment report correctly states that the tiers of middle management need to be developed with more operational responsibility to enable the principal to devote more time to strategic development and consolidation. The fortnightly college meeting involving college staff at all levels has as its main focus the management of students' personal needs as well as preparation for inspection.

27. The quality improvement cycle clearly identifies the key review and monitoring activities to be undertaken each month. Outcomes from review and monitoring will ensure the timely reporting of key management outcomes to management, trustees, the LSC, auditors and other regulatory bodies. Quality assurance policies and procedure are well documented. It is too soon to judge the impact of developments in the quality assurance system on the college provision. The college responds well to the views of students, parents and Connexions personal advisors. The teaching observation scheme that commenced in April 2005 has been effective in supporting new teachers to develop teaching skills. Grades awarded by college observers generally matched those awarded by inspectors. The well-established centre wide staff appraisal and supervision scheme is effective in identifying staff development and training needs. Staff are keen to take part in the training opportunities available to support them to develop the basic knowledge skills and experience required in their developing professional roles. The majority of staff do not yet have minimum required qualifications to fulfil their care and teaching roles. Although the self-assessment process is new it is effective in gaining responses from all staff. The judgements in the report are honest and understood by all staff

28. The college has a strong commitment to value people. However duties under SENDA have only recently been fulfilled and the college does not yet meet its duties under the Race Relations Act. Although the majority of staff has had awareness training in equality and diversity issues, this has not yet impacted on teaching and learning activities in the classroom.

29. Senior managers are actively involved in researching a management information system to support the efficient development of the collection and analysis of data to record student achievement and analyse trends over time. A thorough information and communication strategy provides a sound basis for the development of technological innovations at the colleges. Financial

management at the centre is well managed and the college has benefited from the robust systems in operation at the centre. The college's provision is satisfactory overall and provides good value for money. For example the number of students in the first year has made the course viable, the project has been well planned and teaching and learning resources are sufficient to meet student need.

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