



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE



The Mount Camphill Community

CONTENTS

[Basic information about the college](#)

[Part A: Summary](#)

[Information about the college](#)

[How effective is the college?](#)

[Quality of provision in curriculum and occupational areas](#)

[How well is the college led and managed?](#)

[To what extent is the college educationally and socially inclusive?](#)

[How well are students and trainees guided and supported?](#)

[Students' view of the college](#)

[Other information](#)

[Part B: The College as a whole](#)

[Achievement and standards](#)

[Quality of teaching, training and learning](#)

[Leadership and management](#)

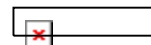
[Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas](#)

[Social and life skills](#)

[Pre-vocational subjects](#)

[Literacy, numeracy and communication](#)

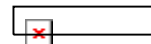
Basic information about the college



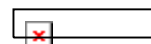
Name of college:	The Mount Camphill Community
Type of college:	Independent, specialist, residential
Principal:	Andrew McDougall, on behalf of the management team
Address of college:	Faircrouch Lane Wadhurst East Sussex TN5 6PT
Telephone number:	01892 782025
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Chair of governors:	Bjarte Haugen
Reference number*:	307027
Name of reporting inspector:	Charlie Henry HMI
Dates of inspection:	6-10 December 2004

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

Part A: Summary



Information about the college



The Mount Camphill Community is an independent specialist college that provides further education (FE) and training for residential and day students aged 16 to 25. The community is part of the Camphill Movement, which was founded in 1940 to create communities in which vulnerable children and young adults can learn and work in a mutually supportive environment. The Mount is dedicated to serving the needs of young people with learning difficulties in their transition to adulthood. The Camphill organisation is inspired by Christian ideals as articulated by Rudolf Steiner, and is based on the acceptance of the spiritual uniqueness of each human being, regardless of religious or racial background. The Mount is staffed by residential co-workers and day staff. The senior co-workers live in the community and most take on the role of house co-ordinators and team leaders; some are also tutors. The trainee co-workers are volunteers from a wide range of countries and usually work at The Mount for one year.

The community is located in Wadhurst, East Sussex and is a registered educational charity, limited by guarantee. There are four house communities on the site, each with specific resources which offers residential accommodation for students who have a broad range of learning difficulties. There are craft workshops for estate and rural skills, horticulture, pottery, weaving, woodwork, cookery and

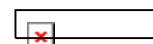
catering. In the main house, which is a renovated monastery, are classrooms, a library and a community hall. There is a large vegetable garden and orchard. There is a gymnasium as well as facilities for other sporting activities. Educational and leisure activities, including swimming and horse riding, are extended by the use of facilities in neighbouring villages and towns. The village of Wadhurst is within walking distance and provides opportunities for shopping and social events. Tunbridge Wells is within easy reach by train and is used for leisure and entertainment, as well as providing further opportunities to develop independent living skills.

There are 32 students, all except one of whom are residential, spending term-time in the community and returning home or to other placements for the holidays. All students have significant learning difficulties; a few have additional disabilities including visual and/or hearing impairment, and communication difficulties. There are 17 female and 15 male students. Almost two thirds of students are aged 19 and above. Two students are from minority ethnic backgrounds. There are 29 students who are funded solely by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), and a further one who is jointly funded by a local authority social services department. The remaining students are funded by a social service department and by private arrangements.

Most students attend the Mount for four years, progressing from the initial foundation year to the craft programme. A few students commence the craft programme when they start at the community. Students have recently begun to follow courses leading towards Open College Network (OCN) awards in workshop activities. Occasionally, students follow a City and Guilds programme in cookery and undertake music examinations.

The aim of the community is 'to develop individual abilities both in terms of outer practical skills and as a path of learning towards the realisation of responsibility, motivation and independence.'

How effective is the college?



The Mount Camphill Community makes good provision for its students. Teaching and learning are good overall. Students make very good gains in their personal and social development and effectively gain practical and independent life skills. Progress and achievement are good in communication and numeracy and are satisfactory in other aspects of literacy. Residential accommodation and other learning resources are of high quality and are used well to support learning. The community's key strengths and areas for improvement are listed below.

Key strengths

- effective development of practical craft and independent life skills

- good development of numeracy and communication skills

- good teaching in most areas

- highly effective use of residential houses

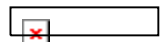
- very good practical and craft resources
- very effective personal support and guidance
- effective implementation of the community's philosophy
- good day-to-day management of students' learning
- effective involvement of the community's council.

What should be improved

- baseline assessment and its use in establishing the most important areas for learning
- monitoring and recording of students' progress
- implementation of the community's literacy strategy
- work experience opportunities
- the range of nationally recognised awards.

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

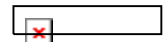
Quality of provision in curriculum and occupational areas



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)

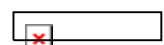
Area	Overall judgements about provision, and comment
Social and life skills	Good. Very good teaching meets students' needs well. The houses provide a home-like environment where students learn effectively. They make good progress in gaining independent living skills and very good progress in their personal development. The community has accurately identified that procedures for monitoring and recording students' progress should be used more consistently.
Pre-vocational subjects	Good. Students produce a high standard of practical and craft work using very good quality resources. Lessons are well planned. Staff work effectively to improve students' behaviour so that they make more progress in their vocational skills. Weaknesses in baseline assessment and monitoring of progress mean that students' achievements are not always fully recorded.
Literacy, numeracy and communication	Satisfactory. Effective encouragement and support enables students to make good progress in developing numeracy and communication skills. Progress in literacy is satisfactory where there is less staff expertise and fewer resources. Assessment and recording of progress in numeracy are good in craft subjects but are less well developed in other areas of students' work and in literacy.

How well is the college led and managed?



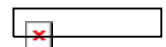
The leadership and management of the community are good. There is effective strategic planning and decision and the formal arrangements to manage the provision work well. The ethos and philosophy of the community permeates all aspects of students' experience and they benefit from the calm and supportive environment. The community's council supports and guides the community's direction well and the members are actively involved in its development. Quality assurance and self-assessment are effective; these were a weakness in the last inspection. All staff are involved in the procedures and the consequent report is evaluative and, overall, identifies the strengths and weaknesses found during inspection. The community is effective in identifying and suitably modifying ideas from other colleges to contribute to its improvement. However, the community does not rigorously seek the views of past students, parents and carers to identify aspects of the provision that work well or areas which could be improved. Communication across the provision is good. Peer appraisal of teaching has successfully brought about improvements and good practice is routinely shared. Financial management is sound and the community provides good value for money.

To what extent is the college educationally and socially inclusive?



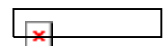
learning difficulties and/or disabilities and behavioural difficulties. Two students are from minority ethnic backgrounds. Most students travel significant distances to attend. Students are encouraged to speak for themselves and make choices, and they feel respected and valued. Although the community makes good use of local facilities, they are used insufficiently for work experience placements. Issues relating to equality and diversity are addressed very well. A wide range of activities provides the students with opportunities to experience and gain understanding of other cultures and religions. The community is compliant with child protection procedures and the requirements of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 (SENDA) and the Race Relations (amendment) Act 2000. Staff effectively challenge bullying, harassment and racial stereotyping if they occur. Provision for numeracy and the development of communication skills is good, and is satisfactory for other aspects of literacy. Key skills are not taught.

How well are students and trainees guided and supported?



Support and guidance for students are good. Personal support for students is very good. All staff work very well together to ensure that students receive prompt, relevant and effective personal support at all times. Good attention is paid to all aspects of students' health and well-being. Specialist assessments establish the precise support to meet students' social, emotional and learning needs and a wide range of therapies effectively support their development. The induction of students is comprehensive and makes good use of the very effective communication across the community. Information and advice given to students, and to parents and carers, are good. Communication with parents and carers is maintained throughout students' placements. Partnership links with the local Connexions service and other specialist agencies are good and students receive effective impartial advice and guidance about future progression opportunities.

Students' view of the college



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

What students like about the college

- the co-workers, who are kind and helpful

- trips to the village and Tunbridge Wells

- being able to phone their parents whenever they want to in the evenings

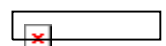
- everyone is very friendly

- making things
- music and singing
- cooking
- working on the estate, being able to be outdoors with the animals and trees
- making a table, which is used in one of the houses
- washing up and doing things in the house
- living with friends.

What they feel could be improved

- having to work in the grounds when it is raining
- transport to the station and Tunbridge Wells
- having to do homework.

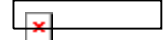
Other information



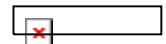
The college inspection report will normally be published 12 working weeks after the inspection. Once published, the college has two months in which to prepare its post-inspection action plan and submit it to the local LSC. The college's action plan must show what action the college will take to bring

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



Achievement and standards

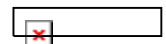


1. There are no significant differences in the achievements of students aged 16 to 18 and those aged 19 and above. Male and female students achieve at similar levels, as do students from different ethnic backgrounds. Retention rates are high, with an average of over 95% for the last three years. This is in line with other independent specialist colleges. Most students achieve their long-term goals. They make progress to a more independent life either in adult Camphill communities or supported accommodation in their home areas, where they continue to develop their practical craft and independent life-skills. The other students return to their family home and receive a locally arranged package of care and training. In the last three years, one student has progressed to work immediately after leaving the community.

2. Students achieve well against the short-term targets set in their individual learning plans. However, weaknesses in assessment and monitoring result in the extent of students' progress not being fully recorded. There are no achievements of nationally recognised awards, although OCN award programmes have recently begun in craft and practical skills.

3. Students develop very good personal and social skills. Students' confidence and independence increase substantially as they learn new skills. For example, students take part in many performances, such as the eurhythmy performance of 'A Polish Legend' at a recent open day for parents. They make substantial improvements in their communication skills and in self-advocacy, as demonstrated in their contribution to reviews of their individual learning plans. Students increasingly become more able to evaluate what they have learned and what they need to learn next. Students who have social and behavioural difficulties make very good progress; for example, in reducing repetitive conversation about the same topic to allow discussion about a wider range of subjects and improved relationships with others. Practical numeracy skills increase well, for example, when used in gardening and craft activities and in independent life-skills, such as when preparing food. Literacy progress is satisfactory. Students continue to develop their craft and practical skills well, producing work of a good standard, especially in their final year 'masterpiece' project. Many of the items made are used within the students' houses. Foundation-year students make good progress in developing practical skills through their project work; for example, when following the entire process from shearing a sheep to making felt. Students make similarly good progress in independent living skills, for example, improving dish washing and putting crockery and cutlery away afterwards, using a mobile phone, and helping to look after children.

Quality of teaching, training and learning



4. The standard of teaching and learning is good. Underlying this is the very successful

person. During inspection the majority of lessons observed were of good or better quality and no unsatisfactory lessons were seen. The quality of teaching and learning was consistently high across practical and craft skills, social and independent life skills, including sessions that took place within the houses, and for practical numeracy and communication. Teaching and learning of literacy are satisfactory.

5. One strength of lessons is the thorough understanding most staff have of their students that enables them to plan activities that are well matched to their individual needs. This enables students to develop and gain skills effectively. In the best lessons, staff provide a wide range of activities with varying amounts of support. In less successful lessons, planning is weak and there is insufficient identification of the important targets for students to learn, particularly their literacy development, and opportunities for developing these skills are sometimes missed.

6. Staff discuss effectively with students what is expected of them and use questioning well to check this understanding. This encourages students to develop their confidence and communication skills. Questioning is also used successfully to establish what has been learned and increases students' ability to review and evaluate their own learning. Tutors are particularly skilful at leaving just the right amount of time for such responses, and are not drawn into giving the answer too quickly. Similarly, staff give students plenty of time to practice skills they are learning. This helps students develop perseverance.

7. There is very effective management of behaviour, based on well-understood and consistently implemented strategies by all staff. While students are encouraged effectively to work independently within their groups, there are too few opportunities for this to be extended and, when appropriate, for them to work without close supervision.

8. Trainee co-workers are usually well deployed and provide valuable support. In addition, since they are of similar age to the students, they provide valuable role models, demonstrating how to behave towards one another with courtesy and respect.

9. Staff have a good range of experience and qualifications to meet the needs of the students. Many of the staff are trained as tutors in curative and Waldorf education, and many have specialist qualifications and expertise in the areas that they teach, including horticulture, drama, gym, eurhythmics and music. There is insufficient expertise in the teaching of literacy. Most staff have worked at the Mount for a substantial length of time and contribute effectively to training the young volunteer co-workers who work in the community. Staff have a good understanding of students' learning difficulties and/or disabilities and seek information and training where expertise is not present within the community, for example, Asperger's Syndrome and epilepsy. The trainee co-workers contribute effectively to the quality of students' learning, bringing a rich diversity of experiences of cultures from around the world. These experiences are evident in the project clubs that are organised by the trainee co-workers each Thursday afternoon; for example, when cooking meals based on recipes from other countries.

10. There are high-quality accommodation and resources to develop students' practical and craft skills and, in the houses, for improving their independent living skills. Risk assessments are good. There is careful consideration about potential risks in each practical and craft area and how these relate to individual students' learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Resources are adapted as necessary to meet the needs of students who have physical difficulties. In line with the community's very high respect for their environment, all resources and accommodation are very well cared for. An important aspect of this is demonstrated in the quality of the food used. A significant amount of this is grown in the community's garden and is supplemented by local organic produce. There is good use of the local community to extend the range of facilities that are on site; for example, for horse riding and swimming. While local shops in Wadhurst and Tunbridge Wells are used by students, for example, to buy toiletries, there are not sufficient opportunities to practice shopping for groceries. There are a few shortcomings in the provision of specialist equipment, for example, for learners who have visual impairment. This need had been recognised prior to the inspection and suitable equipment has been ordered. Similarly there is an insufficient range of resources for literacy and there is also too little access to information and communication technology (ICT) in the evenings and at weekends, for example, for students' to practice their skills sending emails to their families.

11. Good arrangements for pre-admission assessment includes recent, relevant reports from students' previous schools, medical reports, information from parents and, where appropriate, reports from educational psychologists. These are built upon by a residential visit that provides valuable opportunities for students to be assessed while experiencing life in the houses and the workshops. When students begin their programmes their initial assessment is based on a sample of curriculum activities in craft work, life and social skills and literacy, numeracy and communication. However, as the community identifies in their self assessment, this assessment is insufficiently detailed to form an effective base line on which to measure progress.

12. Formal reviews and ongoing informal feedback provide students with helpful information about their progress. The annual cycle for reviewing students' development is effective. Students are encouraged to be reflective and evaluate their own personal, social and educational achievements and are fully involved in identifying areas for further development. However, ongoing assessment is not sufficiently rigorous to capture fully the progress made by the students while at the community. There is also inconsistent use of assessment information in planning the next stage of learning. Initial assessment and recording which takes place in the foundation year is good. The reporting to parents and/or carers about students' progress in the foundation year is very effective but information is not provided routinely during the student's main college programme.

13. The range of courses provides good opportunity for choice and meets students' needs well. Most students begin their time at the Mount by following the foundation programme. This successfully introduces them to important aspects of life in the community, including respecting and valuing themselves and others, as they work through a range of practical projects and take part in therapeutic artistic and physical activities, including eurythmy. Subsequently they enter the main college programme which, for most students, last three years. The first year initially involves a series of taster courses in each of the practical and craft areas. This enables students to select one or two areas to follow in more detail during the remainder of their course, building up to a 'masterpiece' project in the final year. Students are involved very well in choosing their individualised programme, consisting of practical or craft work alongside appropriate therapeutic, artistic and leisure activities. Open College Network (OCN) awards have recently been introduced to recognise students' achievements, however, there are still insufficient opportunities for them to follow nationally recognised vocational awards that would extend their opportunities after leaving the community.

14. Communication and numeracy development are integrated well into the practical, craft and life skills curriculum, however, literacy is only satisfactorily promoted. Equality of opportunity and diversity is promoted effectively through the curriculum. Cultural diversity is especially well promoted through the celebration of Christian and other faith festivals and the seasons of the year. The extended curriculum is very good. A wide range of events are organised and many of these are in response to specific requests by students. Activities are organised within houses and for the whole community, for example, the dance and video clubs. Students take part in a variety of leisure events away for the Mount; they go camping and undertake outdoor activities, and visit places of cultural interest.

15. Transition planning is particularly successful in preparing those students who advance to living within an adult community. This preparation includes a three week work experience placement within such a community. However, transition planning is insufficient in preparing students for adult life within the wider community. For example, there are no opportunities for students to undertake work experience in such a setting where they can practice and develop further the practical skills they have learned, as well as their personal and social skills. A valuable part of the preparation to leave the community for all students involves a residential biography retreat where they work within a small group to reflect on their lives.

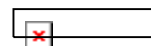
16. Support and guidance for students are good. In particular, personal support is very good. Students have access to relevant and effective support on personal issues through high-quality relationships with the house 'parents', co-workers and tutors. For example, two young people felt able to seek advice and support about forming trust in their relationship. House parents support the students well in their role as key worker and students are provided with a mentor as they progress through the community. In addition, good arrangements ensure continuity of personal care between the houses and community through both a formal meeting and informal communications daily. This

is particularly supportive for students with emotional and behavioural development needs. A well-planned and thorough induction helps new students to adjust to life in a residential provision, get to know their house parents and establish relationships with their peers and co-workers. During this period there are very effective assessments to establish the precise support to meet each student's learning needs. These include access to a broad range of therapies and good strategies to improve behaviour, if necessary. For example, one student has therapy at the beginning of each day to support him in controlling over-active behaviour. Another student is gaining balancing skills through therapy which concentrates on centring and self-correction. Counselling and specialist advice, on such subjects as sex and relationships and information about drugs and their addictive nature, are provided where appropriate.

17. Support arrangements, during all contexts of the students' life in the community, is particularly effective for the development of practical numeracy skills. In personal development and independent living skills, support is very good and ranges from structured sessions which focus on individual students specific needs to less formal support from trainee co-workers. Peer support is encouraged and is a strength of the community. There is also good deployment of trainee co-workers in craft sessions to support students in gaining practical skills, discussing personal issues and in developing appropriate social relationships.

18. Arrangements for monitoring punctuality and attendance are effective and help students to develop good time keeping. Students learn to be on time for breakfast and to complete household tasks and be punctual for lessons. Students who are late are asked the reason why and any student who is seen out of lessons is routinely questioned about where they should be. Students receive satisfactory impartial individual advice and guidance on future progression opportunities at reviews. Involvement of Connexions advisors with groups of students is at an early stage of development, as is the careers library.

Leadership and management



19. Leadership and management are good. The guiding principles of mutual care and respect form the basis of the philosophy and ethos of the community. The community functions for the mutual benefit of its members with the aim of allowing everyone the freedom to fulfil their potential, including students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. This shared sense of mission and purpose permeates the entire community. All staff have a very good understanding of their role within their students' development. Students feel valued and benefit from the calm and supportive environment. The community demonstrates effective strategic planning and decision making.

20. Formal arrangements to manage the provision work very well. Decisions are made on behalf of the community by the management group which also acts as the pivotal role in managing quality improvement. This group is supported well in its decision making through a series of sub groups which take responsibility for areas such as finance, maintenance and administration. The holistic nature of the provision is managed and monitored very effectively through faculties. These include the foundation year, the college, arts, movement and music, home (residential), numeracy and literacy group and therapy group. Each group has an agreed outline of their tasks. For example, one of the tasks for the college faculty is to plan and oversee the curriculum, and one of the responsibilities of the home faculty is quality assurance in the house settings.

21. The community's council actively supports and guides the community's direction and brings useful additional expertise. Council members support and, where necessary, challenge the community's decision making and have a strong interest in the development of the students. The council monitors the quality of the provision well and has a thorough knowledge of its key strengths and weaknesses.

22. Communication across the community work well. Information is disseminated effectively through

a series of meetings with set agenda items and through presentations. All members of the community are well informed about the students' emotional, social, cultural and spiritual development. Daily meetings ensure that the changing needs of students are addressed effectively. Students are given opportunities to provide feedback and contribute to decision making about matters in the houses and on their courses. However, there are no formal arrangements where students contribute to decision making within the community, such as a student council or forum.

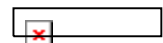
23. Quality assurance and self-assessment have improved well since the last inspection when they were judged to be a weakness. The community actively identifies and modifies good practice from other colleges to bring about further improvements. Peer appraisal and review has been developed and is effective in improving the quality of the provision. Although the community has found this approach difficult, within their philosophy of mutual regard, the consequent sharing of good practice and discussion has enhanced the quality of teaching and learning. Insightful evaluation has led to a revision of appraisal criteria to reflect the wide range of teaching and learning situations. Opportunities for staff development are good and reflect the requirements of a residential provision and the changing support needs of the students. While feedback from parents and carers is used to evaluate the provision and indicate aspects which could be improved, this process is not sufficiently rigorous. The community does not systematically seek the views of past students, parents and carers to identify aspects of the provision that work well or areas which could be improved, particularly for those students who return to their home communities.

24. Rigorous self-assessment is an integral aspect of the community's quality assurance practice and involves all staff. Changes to the decision-making role of the management group and the implementation of a coherent quality cycle are examples of improvements that have followed self-evaluation. The self-assessment report is critical, very detailed and accurately identifies most key strengths and areas for development.

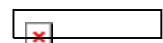
25. The promotion of equality and diversity is very good. Equality of opportunity permeates all aspects of the life of the community. Festivals that celebrate the religious and seasonal cycle of the year take account of students' varied backgrounds and encourage a multicultural perspective. Staff from other countries provide students with experiences of other cultures, food and customs. The community meets its responsibilities with regard to safeguards and has satisfactory policies and procedures for the protection of children and for vulnerable adults. The legislative requirements of the SENDA and the Race Relations (amendment) Act 2000 are comprehensively met. Policies and procedures effectively ensure non-discriminatory access and recruitment. The race equality policy and its implementation plan are well considered. Arrangements by the community's council to monitor and review these policies and their implementation are good. Effective measures eliminate oppressive behaviour, including all forms of harassment. Procedures for complaints ensure they will be handled fairly, in good time and be reviewed by the community's council.

26. Financial management is sound. The support needs identified on the contracts with the LSC are met. Resources are effectively deployed. The community provides good value for money.

Part C: Curriculum and occupational areas



Social and life skills



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

Strengths

- good progress in development of social and life skills

- high quality teaching

- very successful behaviour management

- very good resources

- very effective therapeutic support.

Weaknesses

- insufficient monitoring of progress

Scope of provision

27. Social and life skills development is integral to all students' programmes and covers a wide range of activities. This includes timetabled sessions of movement and physical activity, arts and music, and remedial therapies. In addition, students participate in an extended curriculum based in the four residential houses, including preparing meals and undertaking other domestic duties. Students receive additional support during the formal timetabled lessons as well as during informal learning opportunities within everyday situations. This support is provided by tutors, co-workers, house parents and therapists, as well as by other students. Students use the wider community when shopping, on trips to places of interest and on the regular visits to a variety of leisure facilities in the local area.

Achievement and standards

28. Students demonstrate good progress in personal and life skills development through active participation in all aspects of community life. Students develop their emotional maturity, many take increasing responsibility for their own learning and evaluate the progress they make. Peer evaluation is also developed and raises students' understanding of social awareness and the complexities of relationships. They develop and use appropriate social skills, such as working with others, taking turns and treating other students with respect; for example, when working as a team during honeycomb processing or vegetable planting.

29. The majority of students participate well in the extended curriculum activities. Students enjoy these sessions and choose when to attend and which activities to join. This decision making shows considerable progress towards independent living and effective social interaction. Photographic evidence charts students' achievements, and celebrations are held for the wider community to share and acknowledge progress.

Quality of education and training

30. Teaching is very good. In the most effective lessons, tutors ensure that the activities are carefully planned and match well the needs of each student. Tutors use questioning well to check students are learning and focus further support. Students are encouraged to manage their own learning and provide support for, and receive support from, other students. In one lesson, students were asked to prepare the room for felt making without the tutor or co-workers' intervention. The students worked together as a team supporting each other and successfully completed the tasks. They asked the staff a few questions when they wanted to check what they were doing was correct.

31. Challenging and inappropriate behaviour is managed very effectively in formal and informal situations across the whole community. All staff respond consistently, following agreed strategies with gentle but firm responses that students understand. Students respect and show tolerance to each other and contribute effectively to helping other students improve their behaviour. For example, at breakfast, one student was becoming over-excited and another student gently asked him to calm down and finish his breakfast. The student finished his cereal and joined in other conversations more appropriately without any intervention from house parents or co-workers.

32. Students live in the community's four houses together with house parents and co-workers. This provides the opportunity for them to develop their social relationships within a home-like environment. Resources within these houses are very good and are used to help students improve their independent living skills; for example, in the morning as they prepare to go to their lessons and at lunchtime when they return for their meal. The extensive grounds and facilities are also used to develop students' social and life skills for leisure activities and through their individualised practical and craft-based programmes. Staff have considered the possible health and safety risks involved in the activities and have planned accordingly to minimise these. Whole community events further extend the opportunities for learning as part of a larger group. Staff are suitably experienced and qualified in helping students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities develop skills. Trainee co-workers from many countries spend a year in the community and provide a valuable breadth of experience to the students' learning. This helps students learn a little about life in other countries, for example, as they prepare, cook and eat dishes from around the world.

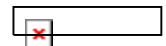
33. Overall, initial assessment is effective. It involves a wide range of information, successfully identifies students' needs and is used well to set targets for their learning. Occasionally, information is not used as promptly as it could be, for example, concerning the implications of visual impairment, and this results in delays in providing the most appropriate resources. The community has accurately identified that procedures for monitoring and recording students' progress should be used more consistently. Plans for improvement have been made.

34. There is a good range of opportunities to develop students' social and life skills as they undertake the practical and craft activities within their programmes. In addition, there is a wide selection of timetabled lessons to further broaden their personal development, including eurhythmmy, gym, art and music. This broad range of courses and activities meets students' needs effectively. There is a very effective tutorial system which provides students with the opportunity to build on self-evaluation and reflection, alongside peer evaluation. Students are supported very effectively by their house parents and vocational tutors. In their final two years, students have a mentor who provides additional personal support and guidance to help with the transition from the community to their next placements. There is a wide range of medical and therapeutic support available and this contributes well to students' learning. These include a speech therapist and general practitioner who are knowledgeable about the community's philosophy and approaches and provide advice that is consistent with these. For example, one student has a short, individual daily eurhythmmy session to build concentration and inner balance to help him focus at the start of the day. Records show that the student has become calmer, exhibits less challenging behaviour and has grown in confidence and self-esteem. Careers guidance is provided in partnership with the local Connexions service personal advisors. This partnership is in an early stage of development and involves advisors working with tutors and therapists to provide guidance and information to help students plan for the future.

Leadership and management

35. Leadership and management are good. Quality assurance procedures are in place, with regular reviews and monitoring of individual progress. Staff and other resources are used very effectively. The whole community is involved in the development of the robust self-assessment report which is an accurate reflection of the progress made and clearly identifies areas for further development. There is strong leadership through the community management and organisational structure that is incorporated throughout the programmes offered and is addressing the areas identified for strategic and day-to-day development. As a result, the community's aim to provide an atmosphere where the potential of each student is recognised and fostered in a therapeutic, educational and social environment is achieved well. Successful promotion of equality of opportunity and diversity is also integral to this achievement.

Pre-vocational subjects



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

Strengths

- high standard of practical work

- much effective teaching

- very effective behaviour management

- very high-quality resources for craft and practical activities.

Weaknesses

- insufficiently detailed baseline assessment

- insufficient monitoring and recording of students' progress.

Scope of provision

36. On admission to the community, most students initially follow the foundation-year programme which is designed to provide the experience and confidence to embark on the main pre-vocational training programme. There are currently five students on this course. They undertake a range of craft projects, for example, working with wool and making a wattle fence. There are a further 25 students on the community's three-year craft programme. In the first term of this programme,

students complete short 'taster' courses in the craft and practical activities before making their final choice of a course to study for the remainder of the three years. Most students study a single course although, in some cases, students may follow two part-time courses. The community offers a range of pre-vocational craft and practical subjects that include weaving, cooking/catering, gardening, pottery, baking, and woodwork, and estate and rural skills. OCN credits at entry level and level 1 were introduced in woodwork, pottery and weaving in August 2004.

Achievement and standards

37. Students produce high standards of work. They produce good-quality artefacts for use in the community or for sale, such as rugs, table linens and garden furniture. Students work effectively in the garden and 'poly' tunnels, to grow a wide range of vegetables, which are prepared and eaten by the whole community throughout the year. The students also harvest fruit, and process honey, which contribute to the organic diet enjoyed by the students and staff. Most students extend their craft skills through additional activities in the evenings, such as knitting and cooking.

38. Students are proud of their achievements and many are able to explain how these have contributed to increases in their personal and social confidence. Communication skills are developed successfully alongside the acquisition of practical and craft skills. As appropriate, behaviour improvement targets are set for students to help them to learn effectively on their craft and practical programme.

39. In a rural studies lesson students worked in the community grounds to identify evergreen trees and to collect foliage to make seasonal decorations. They demonstrated what they had already learned about the varieties of evergreen trees and successfully completed the task without interruption. In another lesson, the students were involved in individual weaving projects at a variety of levels of complexity. In both lessons, students were able to explain and demonstrate the skills they had learned.

Quality of education and training

40. Teaching is good. Most lessons observed were good or better and there was no unsatisfactory teaching. Communication skills are developed effectively and tutors manage students' behaviour very well. They use strategies that enable students to learn how to manage their own behaviour and to participate fully in their lessons. Tutors use clear instructions and check that students understand what they need to do. They allow sufficient time for students to ask and answer questions. Time is set aside to enable students to learn by providing opportunities for reflection and evaluation of their work. There are good relationships between tutors and students which foster learning. The teaching of practical and craft skills is combined with the development of personal skills, such as making choices, staying on task and working safely. In all the lessons observed, students were engaged in the activities that tutors had set for them, many of which provided demanding yet achievable learning experiences such as carding wool or producing pottery. For example, one student who found difficulty in sitting quietly and concentrating on a single activity, developed these aspects through learning to weave and, in so doing, produced items of high quality. There is good management of trainee co-workers to provide sensitive support that enables students to remain on task and develop confidence.

41. In the less successful lessons, planning is often too general. It does not sufficiently specify the important areas that students need to learn, as identified by the targets in the students' individual learning plans. Furthermore, many of these targets are too broad, and progress towards achieving them is difficult to assess. As a result, the incremental gains in practical and craft skills, as well as other aspects of personal development, are recorded insufficiently.

42. There are very good-quality workshops with a wide range of appropriate and well-maintained equipment. This provides a good working environment for the students. There has been good consideration of health and safety requirements, given the potential risks presented by students' individual needs when undertaking the wide range of practical activities. Staff make individualised adaptations to equipment that enable students to produce good-quality work; for example, a simple

guard enabled a student to use a plane more effectively and safely. The grounds also provide very good opportunities for working in estate skills and gardening. Staff are suitably experienced both in their craft subjects and in working with students who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

43. Baseline and ongoing assessment in craft and practical subjects is insufficiently detailed. The foundation year of the programme provides good opportunities for students to learn a range of craft and practical activities, during which students are assessed. However, this process does not yet adequately evaluate students' existing or emerging skills in order to establish what is learned during the course, or provide a clear starting point at the beginning of the three-year programme. As a result, ongoing monitoring and recording of students' progress does not always provide a sufficiently detailed summary of the skills gained. The community has recently introduced OCN awards in a few areas of practical and craft work but it is too soon to judge their overall effectiveness in assessing achievement.

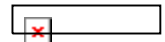
44. Overall, there is a good range of courses that meets students' needs well. The curriculum is based on the philosophy of Rudolf Steiner and successfully provides the framework for staff to promote the ethos of the community. The estate and rural skills course has recently been introduced to meet better the needs of students. However, there are not sufficient opportunities for students to undertake nationally recognised vocational awards. Furthermore while there are valuable opportunities for final-year students to undertake a three-week work experience placement at other Camphill establishments, these do not extend into the wider community. These limitations restrict decisions for a few students about their next steps after completing their course at the Mount.

45. Staff provide very good personal support for students. This support extends beyond formal lessons and enables students to practise the skills they have learned in the evenings and at weekends.

Leadership and management

46. Leadership and management are good. Quality assurance procedures are good, overall. The arrangements for reviewing individual students' learning and progress are rigorous, however, there is insufficient use of feedback from past students. The self-assessment report is comprehensive and weaknesses correspond with those identified by inspectors, including the need to develop further baseline assessment and the ongoing recording of achievement. Equal opportunities are promoted effectively through lessons where teaching takes account of cultural diversity; for example, through reference to other cultural designs such as Latin American influences used in weaving, and the preparation of meals using recipes from other countries.

Literacy, numeracy and communication



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

Strengths

- good progress in developing practical numeracy skills and communication

- effective encouragement, guidance and support

- good awareness of current strengths and weaknesses.

Weaknesses

- insufficient staff expertise in a range of literacy strategies
- too few specialist resources to support literacy development
- insufficiently detailed assessment of progress.

Scope of provision

47. All students receive teaching to develop their literacy, numeracy and communication skills. In the foundation year, this is done as group lessons and, in subsequent years, each student receives at least one individual session in basic skills each week. Students also practise their speaking skills in speech and drama lessons. Some students receive therapeutic speech support. Further literacy, numeracy and communication work takes place in the vocational activities, where tutors support students in basic skills which are closely related to the practical work. In the residential houses, house parents and trainee co-workers help students with homework and support them in writing letters, completing diaries and preparing for shopping trips.

Achievement and standards

48. Students' achievements in numeracy and communication skills are good. Students develop practical numeracy skills well. They can measure effectively, using standard units or in estimating by comparison with similar objects. Students make good use of scales in the house kitchens and understand the approximate amounts needed for some simple recipes. They compile lists in preparation for shopping and many students make good progress in understanding the amount of money they will need. Almost all students are confident in coin recognition.

49. Students try hard to speak clearly in formal and informal situations, for example, whether in class or when greeting visitors. They enjoy practising their speech in conjunction with movement activities, when they learn how to breathe properly and to recognise the rhythm of words. Students' listening skills are also developed well. They pay careful attention to the key words in instructions and explanations. Their comprehension improves and they respond well to questions which are closely related to the task in hand.

50. Students' progress in literacy is satisfactory. Their writing becomes neater and spaces between words become more even. Some students use a computer effectively to help them produce a neater finished copy. Most students find spelling difficult. However, their understanding of common rules and how to spell simple words improve satisfactorily. Their use of adjectives improves, but they have a limited range of vocabulary. Students are good at reading lists and labels and try hard to read more lengthy texts.

Quality of education and training

51. Teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. Communication and practical numeracy

development are good. Tutors start promptly with clear explanations about the lesson activities. Good reminders about previous learning help students remember important skills and knowledge. Questions are framed in a simple, direct language, which students find relatively easy to understand. This helps them to respond confidently. When students are struggling, or need time to answer, tutors and support staff wait patiently, prompting and encouraging when it is needed. Good efforts are made to include those who have limited confidence and help them to take part in 'circle time' discussions.

52. Staff know their students well. They all have a good knowledge of the consistent approach prevalent throughout the community. As a result, students' behaviours are managed well. There are high expectations of students' social skills, and students respond by adopting sensible, thoughtful approaches, showing good regard to the needs of others. Many students are able to resolve difficulties by discussion, negotiation and mutual support.

53. All staff have a good understanding of students' needs in numeracy and communication. In the houses and workshops, relevant practise of numeracy skills often occurs naturally as part of the ongoing routines. Staff have too little knowledge of how to develop literacy skills. Many literacy targets in students' individual learning plans are too general.

54. Tutors plan their intended activities carefully, although their plans do not always sufficiently identify the skills that the students are expected to learn. This makes it difficult to thoroughly assess their progress. Lesson records often concentrate on the activities that students have done and whether they have enjoyed themselves, rather than on what they have learned. Similarly students' progress in activities is often not recorded sufficiently, especially in literacy.

55. Teaching rooms and areas in the residential houses are spacious and allow staff to combine literacy and numeracy with practical and creative activities. Good use is made of kitchen and workshop equipment; for example, for weighing and measuring. Students have satisfactory access to computers during lessons, but do not have independent access during the evenings. There are relatively few specialist resources, such as software, pictures, symbols and games to support learning.

56. Initial assessment, together with the monitoring and recording of progress foundation year are improving. On the craft programme, the assessment and recording of progress in key areas of numeracy is good, but it is less effective in literacy. The community is aware of this weakness and has plans for improvement.

57. The curriculum for numeracy is good. There are suitable opportunities for students to develop their skills in a range of settings throughout the community, including within the residential houses. However, there are too few opportunities to develop literacy, which is not sufficiently linked to activities in the houses and vocational programmes. In the foundation year, the programme for communication, literacy and numeracy is well linked to other activities. The more able students, who are capable of achieving awards, do not have access to externally accredited courses. Students receive very good support and guidance. Staff know students well and provide prompt help for any who are struggling with their work. Support is widely available in different settings across the community.

Leadership and management

58. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Quality assurance is good and contributes well to the detailed analysis of strengths and weaknesses. The evaluations in the self-assessment report are consistent with the inspection judgements. The community does not use information about students' progress to inform further improvement. A specialist tutor oversees the curriculum and collates information about students' progress. At the time of the inspection, this post was vacant and arrangements were in place to appoint a new co-ordinator. The good links between staff in the specialist teaching areas, and the workshops and houses has resulted in a shared commitment to improvement. Equal opportunities are promoted successfully, including through the use of topics from other cultures and the emphasis on meeting each student's needs effectively. Regular meetings

encourage the sharing of ideas and contribute to effective strategic planning. The previous co-ordinator had established a programme of improvement which was beginning to bring about improvement. In particular, the curriculum for numeracy has been well established, with strong links between the various elements of students' programme and residential provision. Planning has taken place for further development of literacy to encompass all community activities, in line with the successful numeracy work, but this has yet to be implemented.

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