



Oakwood Court College

Re-inspection report

Audience Post-sixteen	Published June 2007	Provider reference 131947
--------------------------	------------------------	------------------------------

Introduction

Oakwood Court College was inspected in May 2005. Inspectors from the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) and the Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) carried out the inspection under Section 62 of the Learning and Skills Act. The quality of provision was found to be satisfactory or better in all areas inspected, except in literacy, numeracy and communication which were found to be less than satisfactory. Ofsted is responsible for re-inspecting all provision that is less than satisfactory within two years of the original inspection. If inadequate areas of learning or aspects of provision remain inadequate following re-inspection, inspectors will continue to monitor progress at annual assessment visits, but the areas will not be re-graded. They will be re-inspected during the full college inspection.

The less than satisfactory literacy, numeracy and communication was re-inspected on April 26 and 27th 2007. The outcomes of the re-inspection are as follows.

Curriculum/WBL area/CIF aspect	Original grade	Re-inspection grade
Literacy, numeracy and communications	4	3

Context

All learners receive literacy, numeracy and communication skills training, which is integrated into their programmes. The college also provides discrete group and individual communication sessions. Learners at level 1 and 2 attend discrete courses at a local college.

Strengths

- good progress in communication skills by most learners
- effective planning for individual needs in many lessons
- good integration of literacy, numeracy and communications in most work skills courses
- effective speech and language therapy and support

Areas for improvement

- insufficient analysis of literacy, numeracy and communication requirements in different working environments
- inconsistent use of images to support reading
- slow progress on developing skills through the extended curriculum
- insufficient impact of dyslexia assessments on teaching strategies

Achievement and standards

Achievement is satisfactory overall. Learners make good progress in communication skills. Most learners at pre-entry level with severe communication difficulties achieve external certification. Progress in literacy and numeracy is satisfactory. Most learners achieve internal accreditation but opportunities for external accreditation have been insufficient until recently.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning are now satisfactory overall. Teachers set manageable targets in most work skills lessons. Target setting in other lessons and in the extended curriculum is under-developed. Analysis of the specific skills needed for each work-skill area has yet to be undertaken. Teaching materials are generally well-designed although teachers are not always consistent in their use of symbols to support reading. Literacy, numeracy and communications are integrated effectively into most work-skills courses, and newly adopted accreditation opportunities range from pre-entry to level 2. Initial and diagnostic assessments are thorough, and used to inform learners' targets. The system for recording progress against targets at subject level is effective. Specialist speech and language therapy and support has been introduced more systematically this year. This is beginning to have an impact, although the effectiveness of the interventions in the classroom are not routinely commented upon in teaching observations. Specialist dyslexia assessments are undertaken but the results are not used enough in teaching.

Leadership and management

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Curriculum development is well managed. Staff development opportunities are adequate. Specialist support staffing has increased to appropriate levels. Resources are satisfactory overall. Learners make good use of a system for visual communication with parents and carers over the internet. Quality assurance is satisfactory. The co-ordinator observes work skills lessons and residential support and makes recommendations for improving literacy, numeracy and communication development.

ANNUAL ASSESSMENT VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Name of College: Oakwood Court
Date of visit: 26 April 2007

This feedback contains brief findings from the annual assessment visit. It focuses on the themes explored during the visit and does not attempt to give a comprehensive overview of the college's performance.

Achievement and standards

The effectiveness of measures in place to evaluate learners' overall progress

- There are satisfactory arrangements to track and record learners' progress at subject level. However, the method used to evaluate and record learners' overall progress is overly complicated and lengthy. It does not record individual learners' overall progress adequately. It is not clear how the completed individual learning and support document is used to evaluate progress over time or to inform future transition placements.

The effectiveness of transition arrangements to improve the numbers of learners moving on to provision that constitutes progression

- Transition arrangements have been targeted for improvement and this has resulted in all students having access to an improved transitions programme. There are improved links with the local Connexions personal advisers and new links made with Jobcentre Plus Disability Employment Advisers. The programme is now in place for all learners, but it is too soon for it to have had an impact on learners' progression when they leave the college. The majority of learners to date move into some type of supported living with daytime activities such as attending part-time at a local college, day centres or work experience.

Quality of provision

The effectiveness of specialist support for learners

- Specialist support services have improved. There are now satisfactory arrangements for providing speech and language assessment and support for all

learners that require it from the start of this academic year. Staff have received training in British sign language (BSL) and Makaton. A new basic Makaton course is planned for all staff. Learners have easy access to a good range of external advocates and counsellors who deal with a wide variety of issues that may affect their progress. Access to local physiotherapy and occupational therapy services are obtained when needed. All learners receive mobility training to enable them to travel as independently as possible within the community.

The effectiveness of the revised curriculum in providing a meaningful programme for learners

- There has been good progress in revising the curriculum to better meet the needs of learners. There is an increased focus on vocational training and work placements. Links with the local community have been strengthened and new links made for learners to gain practical skills. For example, the 'working with animals' course has been moved out of the college and learners now learn the skills for working with animals with a local specialist organisation. A new construction unit has been opened this academic year and links made with a local college for learners to progress and work towards vocational qualifications. Work experience for all learners now starts in the first year with a taster programme. Arrangements are now in place to ensure that ongoing work experience placements meet the needs, interests and skills of individual students.

Leadership and management

The rigour of the teaching observation scheme

- The college has made satisfactory progress in revising its pro-forma used for the observation of teaching and learning scheme. However, the feedback does not sufficiently record how effectively specific interventions are being implemented by teaching and support staff. All teaching staff are routinely observed, and receive feed-back at supervision meetings. The observations are not all graded, so it is difficult to measure the college's overall progress on an annual basis. Training is provided following requests at supervision meetings, but the college does not yet produce a plan to show how it will address teaching and learning issues identified as a result of its observations.

The progress made in meeting equalities and safeguarding requirements

- The college has made good progress in developing its disability equality scheme. Learners have been involved in its development and the college has a three year action plan of implementation. Impact assessments are yet to be fully developed. The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) accessibility audit has been updated and the college recognises that, although the premises are adequate for the current cohort, more needs to be done to upgrade the buildings so that they are fully accessible. The college has recently updated its race equality scheme, but has been slow to develop an action plan to show how the policy is being implemented and monitored. Safeguarding arrangements continue to be satisfactory, and the college has complied with the requirements to keep a central register of staff in relation to Criminal Record Bureau checks. The arrangements for monitoring the safety of work placements are comprehensive, and include advice and guidance for employers about the possible impact of disability on performance.

The financial arrangements for monitoring LSC funding

- The college does not keep a systematic record to show how the requirements of learner schedules are being met. The college recognises that, as part of its overall quality assurance arrangements, more needs to be done to demonstrate that the college is providing learners with an appropriate programme. It is planning to appoint someone with overall responsibility for learner support.

Any themes from the pre-visit analysis not explored during the visit:

- No

Any other observations from the visit not identified in the pre-visit analysis:

- Note that the current Principal is retiring and the college is in the process of appointing a new Principal