

ANNUAL ASSESSMENT VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Name of College: Fairfield Farm College

Date of visit: 25 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

Are students making satisfactory progress in developing their communication skills?

- The college has made a reasonable start in focusing more specifically on the development of communication skills. In addition to the work on the development of literacy and numeracy skills discussed below, the college has employed a speech and language therapist to assess the needs of 5 individual students, and of students in groups. Strategies are in place for improving the social skills of all students. Preparations are in place for recording the progress made by students, and the college is currently working to develop an appropriate system to demonstrate distance travelled by individual students.

Quality of education and training

What progress has been made with the embedding of literacy and numeracy within the curriculum?

- Since the previous inspection the college has made significant progress in embedding literacy and numeracy. The co-ordinator for Skills for Life has assessed all students and developed individual short term targets and strategies for literacy, numeracy and communications. Progress has been monitored by the co-ordinator, who has carried out a review meeting with each learner. The co-ordinator is timetabled to work with each tutor for a term to help with the embedding of these skills. Audits of the literacy, numeracy and communications skills required by students in order to complete tasks and activities have been carried out in subject areas. Care staff provide opportunities for students to reinforce and practice activities in the residences.

Have all specialist assessments been completed and are students receiving the identified support?

- The college has made a reasonable start in addressing the need for specialist assessments and support. Those currently on programme requiring specialist assessments have been identified, and assessments have been carried out. Strategies for intervention are in place. Plans are in place, with appropriate staffing, for all new students from September to have assessments as part of the baseline assessment process.

Leadership and management

What progress is the college making with the monitoring of assessment, target setting, planning and recording?

- Since the last inspection in October 2006 the college has made reasonable progress in developing systems to monitor students' progress against targets. Each student has a file which they take responsibility for and ensure staff record progress against each of their targets. The file is carried to each class and is used in the homes and forms the central point for recording progress against targets. Currently the system is paper based but the college are well on with plans for an electronic system to be in place by the autumn term. Prior to the system going live in the autumn term it is planned that all staff will have training in the use of the system. Alongside the database the college are developing a new management information system which will capture all relevant information about each student. This information will be accessible by all staff.

How effectively is information about students' progress being used across the college to raise achievements further?

- There has been reasonable progress in using information about students' progress to raise achievements further. Since the last inspection the college have appointed a manager with responsibility for quality improvement. The quality improvement manager has developed an action plan for the year which identifies key priorities

including a complete review of the quality cycle. The manager has been instrumental in developing the new database system to capture students' progress against targets. It is expected that senior managers will receive regular reports on achievements and this will form part of the revised quality cycle.

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:

- An issue identified at the last inspection was the lack of opportunities for students to develop money management skills. The college has made significant progress in this area. All students, where appropriate, now have a bank account and staff work closely with parents to ensure the students take responsibility for their account. Through the college's own accreditation system skills have been identified for the recognising and handling of money, including budgeting. From September all students will be involved in managing money. The same approach has been adopted with 'time'. Students are involved in making their own appointments and in understanding significant times in the day.
- Since the last inspection in October 2006 college managers have worked in close collaboration with the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and local colleges and in line with LSC strategy the college plan to extend its service level agreement with the local college and other establishments in order to provide a wider range of pre-vocational training. This area is identified in the latest three year development plan.
- Individual risk assessments for students are not sufficiently rigorous, and do not always show how to minimise specific risks.