

Landmarks College

Inspection Report 30 April - 2 May 2007

Audience Post-sixteen	Published June 2007	Provider reference 131900
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Background information

Inspection judgements

Grading

Inspectors use a four-point scale to summarise their judgements about achievement and standards, the quality of provision, and leadership and management, which includes a grade for equality of opportunity.

The descriptors for the four grades are:

- *grade 1 – outstanding*
- *grade 2 – good*
- *grade 3 – satisfactory*
- *grade 4 – inadequate*

Further information can be found on how inspection judgements are made at www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Scope of the inspection

In deciding the scope of this inspection, inspectors took account of: the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans; comments from the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC) or other funding body; and where appropriate the previous inspection report (www.ofsted.gov.uk); reports from the inspectorate annual assessment visits or quality monitoring inspection; and data on learners and their achievements over the period since the last inspection. This inspection focused on the following aspects:

- overall effectiveness of the organisation and its capacity to improve further
- achievements and standards
- quality of provision
- leadership and management.

Description of the provider

1. Landmarks is a specialist day college located in Creswell, north east Derbyshire. The surrounding area is rural, and of outstanding natural beauty and specific scientific interest. It is situated on the borders of Nottinghamshire and south Yorkshire. Founded in 1995, Landmarks is a registered charity and company limited by guarantee. The main base for the college is a 20 acre working farm with purpose built workshops. The college also has lease arrangements for additional facilities and accommodation with local further education colleges and an adjacent farm. The college provides education and training for 68 learners with a wide range of moderate to severe learning difficulties and or disabilities. Eleven learners are fully funded by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). Of the LSC funded learners, one is between 16-18 years of age and 10 are over 19 years of age. Ten learners are male, one is female, and there are no learners from minority ethnic backgrounds.
2. Landmarks College offers a range of externally accredited courses in animal care and practical land-based activities, related to the running of the farm. Pottery and traditional crafts, such as dried flower production and gardening, are also offered. The Skills for Life programme provides literacy, numeracy, communication and e-learning. A life skills programme includes money management, personal care, domestic and kitchen skills. A transition programme offers work experience options. Provision is offered from pre-entry to level 1.
3. The college's mission statement outlines its commitment to provide active learning opportunities for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities, and to continually aim for excellence in its provision.

Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision	Satisfactory: grade 3
Capacity to improve	Satisfactory: grade 3
Achievements and standards	Satisfactory: grade 3
Quality of provision	Satisfactory: grade 3
Leadership and management	Satisfactory: grade 3
<i>Equality of opportunity</i>	<i>Satisfactory: Contributory grade 3</i>

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Satisfactory: grade 3

4. Landmarks College provides satisfactory quality education and support for its learners. Achievements and standards are satisfactory. The development of practical work related skills is good. The achievement of accredited units has improved since the last inspection.
5. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Efforts to address the weakness in teaching and learning identified in the self-assessment report have been successful. Good practice is now shared. Literacy and numeracy teaching is more closely linked to vocational areas but the development of communication skills is underdeveloped. There is good attention to health and safety issues.
6. The college provides a satisfactory range of programmes. Land-based provision has improved and is good. Work experience provision is satisfactory. Opportunities to develop independent living skills are underdeveloped and the enrichment programme lacks variety.
7. Learners receive satisfactory guidance and support. Initial assessment is satisfactory, but pre-entry assessment and admissions procedures require improvement. The transition programme is well developed and prepares learners well for the next stage in their life. Social and educational inclusion are satisfactory.
8. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The principal and curriculum managers have a clear view of how to improve the college that is shared by staff and well supported by trustees. Equality of opportunity is satisfactorily promoted. The college's self-assessment report is satisfactory and the college is taking appropriate action to address the areas for improvement. The college provides satisfactory value for money.

Capacity to improve

Satisfactory: grade 3

9. The college demonstrates a satisfactory capacity to improve its provision for learners. The resolution of the long running dispute in relation to the lease of the college site has brought about a period of stability. The principal is now able to give more attention to improving the quality of the educational provision.

10. Self-assessment is satisfactory overall and clearly identifies areas for improvement. Development planning links effectively to the self-assessment report. The staff have appropriate experience and qualifications to continue to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Actions taken since the last inspection to address the majority of identified areas for improvement have been achieved. However, quality assurance of key teaching and learning processes requires further development. Staff are confident that the management team recognise aspects of provision that need further development, and have their full commitment to continue to improve.

The effectiveness of the steps taken by the college to promote improvement since the last inspection

11. The college has made satisfactory progress in addressing areas for improvement noted during the last inspection and annual assessment visits. Students' achievements overall are satisfactory and standards of work are now good. Assessment and verification arrangements are robust.
12. The development of literacy and numeracy skills has improved. However, there are limited opportunities for the development of independent living skills. Initial assessment processes, especially in relation to literacy and numeracy, now successfully identify learners' levels of attainment. The management of the curriculum has been strengthened by the appointment of curriculum managers.
13. The college now meets statutory requirements in relation to equalities legislation and safeguarding. There has been very good progress to improve the access and quality of accommodation and resources for all learners. Quality assurance arrangements have improved but are still in need of further development. Specialist support for students, with communication difficulties in particular, remains insufficient.

Key strengths

- good development of practical skills
- good attention to health and safety issues
- good individual support for learners
- effective transition process for progression
- good staff development opportunities
- strong links with partner colleges
- good accommodation and resources for practical subjects.

Areas for improvement

The college should address:

- the effectiveness of quality assurance arrangements
- specialist support for communication
- the development of personal, social and independent living skills
- enrichment opportunities
- admissions procedures.

Main findings

Achievements and standards

Satisfactory: grade 3

14. There is no difference between the quality of provision for the one learner aged between 16-18 years of age and those aged 19 and above. Standards of learners' work are good. Internal verification procedures are robust. External verifiers report that programmes are well managed and that work is of a good standard. The self-assessment report is largely accurate. Learners develop very good practical skills from a wide range of real and relevant activities. Learners enjoy their programmes. The emphasis on health and safety is strong.
15. Target setting in practical subjects is good and clearly relates to relevant accreditation. There is good anecdotal evidence from staff and external agencies that learners develop self-esteem, personal and social skills whilst at the college. However, target setting and monitoring of the development of personal and social skills is underdeveloped.
16. Since the last inspection, the college has significantly increased the range of accredited programmes offered to learners. There is a significant increase in the number of units achieved in all aspects of the curriculum, with 89 units achieved in land-based subjects in 2005/2006. In 2005/2006, 33 units were achieved in Skills for Life qualifications. This achievement relates to literacy and numeracy. The development of communication skills is underdeveloped.
17. Destinations are routinely tracked using the newly developed management information system. The number of learners progressing into further education (FE) has increased, with five out of six students moving to other provision for three days a week in 2005/2006. Attendance and punctuality are good. Retention is also good and has been 100% for the last three years. Learners' behaviour plans are satisfactory, but their implementation is not consistent.

Quality of provision

18. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Active learning and participation is promoted through a range of practical activities. There are good quality land-based resources, with specialist equipment, materials and facilities that meets the needs of the learners and are relevant to the workplace. Some lessons successfully integrate literacy and numeracy into activities. There is insufficient emphasis on developing communication skills for pre-entry

learners who lack the conceptual understanding to develop more advanced literacy and numeracy skills.

19. The teaching staff have expertise in their subject areas. Inspectors agree with the college's own judgement that teaching and learning are satisfactory. The self-assessment report accurately identifies most of the key strengths and areas for improvement within teaching and learning. Training in observation of teaching and learning is raising awareness of good practices and highlighting areas for improvement. Since the last inspection, there has been a significant increase in the lessons judged satisfactory or better. The college has benefited from participation in the Basic Skills Agency's Better Teaching Partnership since June 2006. Good health and safety practices are promoted and observed in classrooms and workplaces in college. Risk assessments are good and there is a strong ethos of ensuring a safe environment for staff and learners.
20. Initial and diagnostic assessments successfully identify subject area skills to be developed, support needs and rudimentary preferred learning styles. Target setting for practical subjects is good. Assessments of Skills for Life have improved and learners' progress is monitored and tracked effectively. Identification and development of learners' independent living skills is underdeveloped. Independent living skills are not integrated across the curriculum. Opportunities and resources to develop independent living skills are limited.
21. End of term review reports are comprehensive. Parents or carers are invited to annual review meetings with the learner's agreement. There is good communication with parents or carers. Collaboration with social services, the Connexions service and health agencies is good. The college's self-assessment report is an accurate reflection of the progress that has been made.
22. The college provides a satisfactory range of provision to meet learners' needs and responds effectively to local employers. Landmarks works well with local general further education (GFE) colleges to provide complementary training opportunities. The college is highly regarded by local agencies.
23. The college provides a good range of land-based working environments that enables learners to gain practical and work related skills. Opportunities for work experience are satisfactory. The college works in partnership with the Derbyshire Business Education Partnership to identify appropriate opportunities as well as developing their own.

24. Opportunities to develop the core skills of travelling and using the community are limited. Learners attend a local college for basic skills and information technology. Teaching is in discrete lessons taught by Landmark's staff. Learners would benefit from integration with other further education programmes.
25. The timetable lacks flexibility. Lessons are sometimes too long for learners with short attention spans. There is insufficient provision for personal, social and health education. Although visits and fundraising activities are incorporated into some subject areas, the enrichment programme lacks variety. A recently formed learner forum has requested that sporting activities be included in the curriculum.
26. Guidance and support for learners are satisfactory. Links with Connexions advisors are also satisfactory. The link advisor attached to the college provides good careers advice to learners in their final year. There is good multi-agency working to ensure that transition out of college is well planned and supported. Reviews are well attended by a range of agencies. For the 2005/06 leavers, their post-college placements built upon the skills and knowledge developed whilst at Landmarks.
27. Arrangements for initial assessment have improved. However, insufficient information is systematically gathered at the pre-entry stage to effectively inform baseline assessment. Pre-entry and initial assessment lack specialist input. Learners with communication difficulties have insufficient support from speech and language therapists. Staff have recently received training in developing communication strategies. The college is also working with Derbyshire national health trust to develop a 'total communications' environment. This work is in early stages of development and it is too early to measure its impact.
28. Behaviour plans are useful but they are inconsistently applied by some staff. Information of incidents is collated and analysed. Individual behavioural issues are discussed at team meetings and plans are reviewed and updated. There is anecdotal evidence of good development of self-esteem and learner confidence, and examples of learners who have made significant progress and learnt to manage their behaviour, but this is not well recorded. There is good individual support for learners. Where the support is good it is non-intrusive, there is good concept development, effective questioning, good use of signing and the staff know their learners well. Tutorials are regular and well documented. Occasionally, staff use inappropriate language that does not encourage or prepare learners to develop the maturity needed for work.

Leadership and management

Satisfactory: grade 3

Contributory grade:

Equality of opportunity

Satisfactory: grade 3

29. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The principal and curriculum managers set a clear direction focused on meeting the needs of learners. Self-assessment is satisfactory and has improved since the last inspection. Staff are fully involved, most areas for improvement are clearly identified, and detailed action plans are devised and monitored effectively. However, there is still insufficient substantive evidence used to base some of the judgements contained in the 2005/06 self-assessment report.
30. The quality assurance of teaching and learning is good. Inspectors agree with the college's own assessment that teaching and learning have improved since the last inspection. Management information systems (MIS) have improved significantly, and successfully collate information about learners' achievements on programmes leading to qualifications. Insufficient rigour is applied to the monitoring of other key aspects of teaching and learning such as assessment, target setting and the quality of reviews. Although feedback from parents and learners demonstrate high satisfaction levels, learners' questionnaires are not easy to use. Feedback from external agencies is not systematically collated.
31. The promotion of equality of opportunity is satisfactory. Policies and procedures in relation to equalities legislation are implemented effectively and staff receive appropriate training. The college has a comprehensive disability equality strategy action plan in place that has led to improvements to resources and access for physically disabled learners. However, there are insufficient opportunities for students to learn independence skills and too little specialist support for learners with communication difficulties. The college pays good attention to health and safety issues. Safeguarding procedures comply with most recent guidance to demonstrate that statutory checks are made.
32. Resources and accommodation are good for teaching practical aspects of the provision. Although accommodation has significantly improved since the last inspection, resources and appropriate accommodation for learners to develop independence and life skills remain underdeveloped.
33. Staff have appropriate experience and qualifications. Staff development opportunities are good. The principal has good working relationships with senior tutors and staff feel supported.

34. There are good links with local employers, organisations and general further education colleges that support progression onto mainstream college courses. The college is developing beneficial relationships with other regional independent specialist colleges (ISCs), for peer reviewing.
35. Trustees are highly committed to the continued development of college provision and provide good oversight in relation to the quality of provision. They have provided valuable support to the principal during a period of instability and limited financial resources. Financial management is satisfactory and resources are deployed effectively. The college provides satisfactory value for money.

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