

## MONITORING VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Name of college: Foxes Academy

Date of visit: 6 March 2008

### Context

Foxes Academy is a specialist residential college based in Minehead Somerset which also operates as a fully functioning hotel for the general public. It is an independent limited company run by directors. The college currently trains around 70 learners between 18 and 27 years of age. The college provides a realistic working environment for learners with moderate learning difficulties who wish to progress to part-time or full-time employment in hospitality and catering. Most learners follow a three year programme. In the first two years, they focus on improving their independent living and social skills, and follow vocational options in hospitality and catering. In the third year, learners can take a national vocational qualification (NVQ) level 1 in four different areas of hospitality and catering: food preparation and cooking; food and drink service; housekeeping and multi-skilled hospitality services. During their final year at Foxes, learners take the certificate in food hygiene. The final term is spent in a work placement, which may be with a local employer in the town.

### Achievement and standards

What judgments can be made about learners' achievements in 2006/07	Significant progress
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Achievements are excellent. The college thoroughly analyse the achievement data. In 2006/07 87% of overall targets were achieved which was a 5% increase on 2005/06. There is excellent achievement of NVQ awards. In 2006/07 13 learners took and achieved a full award and 3 learners took and achieved a part award. Learners also achieve food safety and hygiene awards, English Speaking Board (ESB) awards, and awards in communication, numeracy, literacy and ICT. The college introduced their own Moving - On programme in 2006/07 and all learners on the programme achieved this award.

What judgements can be made about the destinations of leavers in 2006/07	Significant progress
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In 2006/07 there were 16 leavers. These leavers were the first to start on the college's own Moving – On programme and as such the college report that the learners were much better prepared for employment and further training because of the course. Out of the 16 leavers two are at FE colleges, eight in part-time employment, four in voluntary work and only two are still looking into work options. Work options do depend on the young people getting living accommodation. Thirteen are in supported living and three returned home. The college are thorough in following up leavers. They issue a survey in December to the previous two years leavers and have an excellent response rate. The current learners are making excellent progress with their Moving – On programme and are further ahead with their plans than last years leavers at this point in time.

#### Quality of provision

What progress has the college made in developing the use of ICT in teaching and learning?	Significant progress
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There are some very good developments in the use of information and communication technology (ICT) both in monitoring and recording learner's progress and in teaching and learning. The very good impact of the use of ICT can be evidenced in the use of the management information system (MIS) to develop the tutorial system. The information from all tutorials is logged onto the MIS and is shared with all relevant staff. This has led to a consistent and coherent approach for all learners. All staff can see what has happened in each tutorial and can build on previous work. The learner's daily event log is also maintained on the MIS. Tutors put relevant information into the log and staff in the houses can pick up this information and carry on working with the learner on particular issues, including behavioural issues. This leads to excellent communication across the whole learners programme.

ICT is given a high profile in the curriculum. All learners have a discrete information technology (IT) session each week and ICT is also embedded throughout the curriculum. All learners have an email account and have access to computers both in the college and in the houses. The use of ICT is encouraged in the community thus further improving independence for the learners. They are taught to use cash machines in banks, mobile phones and

the internet for on-line shopping. All learners have a health and safety induction related to ICT. From September 2007 all learners have had an ICT target set on their individual learning plans.

What progress has the college made in observing support staff?	Significant progress
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The college has observed all learning support staff this year and has undertaken a detailed analysis of the information from the observations. The whole process is supportive and has been well received by the learning support staff. Detailed training has led to the whole college having an understanding of the high expectations for learning support. The impact for the learners has been that learners feel they can now achieve right across the curriculum including the extended curriculum. The involvement of learner support staff in the recording on the Pathway to Life course has enabled them to have a better understanding of learning objectives so they can offer more appropriate support.

What impact is CPD having on the quality of teaching and learning?	Significant progress
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There is very good continuing professional development (CPD) for all staff with a clear impact on learning. Some learning support staff are doing the preparing for teaching in the lifelong learning sector (PTLLS) courses and this has helped to raise the standard of learner support and understanding of teaching and learning. The robust quality improvement (QI) cycle identifies areas for addressing through CPD; for example, last year all staff had training on creating better lesson plans that more precisely identified individual learning objectives (ILOs). This training has led to tutors now being able to better identify on lesson plans what learners can be expected to achieve. Last year staff also had more training on tutorials and the use of the new system for recording outcomes from tutorials. The college are also working with other colleges on peer reviews and the sharing of best practice.

#### Leadership and management

What is the impact on learners of recent curriculum developments?	Significant progress
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The college has developed two new courses. The Pathway to Life course, which is being piloted this year, is in two parts. Part 1 focuses on life skills

and part 2 focuses on vocational skills. The course is excellent. It breaks down into clear tasks all the life skills and vocational skills the learners need to develop. There is a detailed action plan to support the programme and there is a thorough and continuous evaluation during this year. The evaluation has already identified improvements which have been put in place ready for September 2008. The course is very clear and precise and the learners are enjoying their sessions. Evaluations show that staff can see at a glance how well learners are doing and what skills they need to work on. Learners report that they find the course good as they can see how well they are doing and can recognise and remember their own targets much better. The vocational part of the programme has been written to match the work the learners undertake in the hotel.

The other course the college has developed is the Moving – On course. This has proved to be very effective in preparing learners for moving on from the college into employment or further training. The current learners on the Moving – On course are making excellent progress. The recent reviews with third year learners identified that learners are further ahead with transition arrangements than in previous years.