

MONITORING VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Name of college: Pennine Camphill Community

Date of visit: 9 June 2008

Context

Pennine Camphill Community is a residential independent specialist college. It provides further education and training for learners aged 16-25 who have learning difficulties. The college is part of the Association of Camphill Communities. It is based on a 38 acre site which includes five community houses, craft workshops, classrooms, a hall, market garden, farm and riding school. Currently 33 learners are enrolled in 2007/08, mainly aged 19 or over and funded through the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). Many staff are volunteers who live and work at the college. The principal holds his position by nomination from the senior management team and the trustees. The Pennine Camphill Community is a registered charity.

Achievement and standards

What progress has been made in the development of target-setting to ensure all learners achieve their full potential?	Reasonable progress
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The college has clear systems in place for setting targets and measuring progress on accredited programmes. In addition to the national vocational qualifications available to learners at the previous inspection, the college is now registered as a centre to deliver Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network accreditation. Many learners are making good progress on the certificate in life skills course. The college has also worked to improve target-setting for non-accredited achievements since the previous inspection. Staff training is in place to help staff work better with learners to set targets that are realistic but challenging. However, the setting and monitoring of non-accredited targets is not being applied consistently across the organisation. Action is being taken to tackle this, for example to ensure targets are time limited in order to facilitate regular review of progress. It is too early to evaluate the effectiveness of this action.

To what extent are learners developing skills in information technology, which was an area for improvement at the previous inspection?	Reasonable progress
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All learners now have their information technology skills assessed when they join the college. After this initial assessment, specific and challenging targets are set in the

identified areas for development. As well as specific information technology sessions where appropriate, learners are better involved in using their skills in wider contexts, such as presenting their work or emailing each other, staff and parents. An information technology strategy is in place and computer resources have been updated. External certification for information technology skills, where appropriate, is being introduced.

Quality of provision

What progress has been made in development of the curriculum since the previous inspection?	Reasonable progress
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The college has improved a number of aspects of the curriculum since the previous inspection. In particular, the foundation programme is redesigned and more successful at meeting the needs of learners. Initial assessment is completed by the end of the first term and learners are involved to a much greater degree in making learning choices. New learners are more positive about the programme. The programme for developing learners' personal and social skills and health education knowledge is now improved and is delivered appropriately to meet individual needs. Opportunities for external work placements have been extended but remain an area for further improvement. A new role has been identified to co-ordinate this work from September 2008. Links with the wider community are increasing since the previous inspection. Learners are involved well in planning external visits and activities and these are being well used to help reinforce learning, such as independent travel and risk assessment.

Has the college made progress in the provision of specialist support to develop communication skills?	Reasonable progress
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A communication strategy is in place, which is reviewed and updated termly. All staff attend workshop training, where they discuss communication barriers affecting learning. This has led to better awareness across the college. The speech and language therapist works with staff and learners to improve communication, for example staff skills in Makaton signing have improved since the previous inspection. Learners benefit from speech and language therapist led groups focusing on social skills, this includes a group for learners with more developed verbal skills. Communication passports are in place and owned by learners, who use them well within college, on external trips and placements and as part of their transition tools when they leave college. Some aspects of the communication strategy are at an early stage of development, for example the use of symbols and the links between skills for life and speech and language therapy.

Leadership and management

How have quality assurance processes developed since the previous inspection?	Insufficient progress
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The college has made some progress in the development of quality assurance systems since the previous inspection but aspects of this have been slow to be implemented. For example, teaching and learning observations are in place but are not yet linked thoroughly to a quality improvement strategy. Plans are in place to resolve this, for example by developing stronger links between appraisals/termly supervisions and the outcome of observations. The college has identified the need for greater compliance with aspects of its quality assurance arrangements. It has taken considerable time to develop ownership of some aspects of quality assurance across the college. However, involvement of staff in self-assessment is increasing with greater clarification of roles and responsibilities. The college has developed its links with other organisations to assist in this process. Since the previous inspection, trustees are more pro-active in monitoring the work of the college, including the post-inspection action plan.

How well is the 'learner voice' taken into account in the evaluation and planning of provision?	Reasonable progress
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The college is making reasonable progress in giving learners a voice within the organisation. This works partly through structures such as house meetings and the student council. The learner voice has been enhanced across all aspects of their experience at Pennine by their increasing involvement in designing and choosing learning activities and as a result of the improving communication strategy.