

MONITORING VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Name of college: Farleigh Further Education College Swindon

Date of visit: 1 May 2008

Context

Farleigh Further Education College Swindon was established in September 2004 as part of the Priory Group. The college caters for 35 learners of whom two thirds are resident. Most learners are male. The college aims to meet the needs of learners with differing levels of cognitive ability, ranging from those with moderate learning difficulties to university entrants, through local mainstream providers. Learners have access to an extensive range of academic and vocational options combined with opportunities to develop social and independence skills in house and within the wider community. The college offers residential provision in three houses situated in the heart of Swindon's Old Town, each with different levels of support so that learners can progress to houses offering less support where possible. Day learners are encouraged to access the houses to join in with the evening and weekend activities. The college was found satisfactory at the previous inspection in 2006.

Achievement and standards

What progress has been made in capturing the progress made by learners in all aspects of their programme?	Reasonable progress
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Learners continue to achieve well in partner colleges, with good pass rates. The college has made progress in capturing other important aspects of their development, such as gains in social skills and confidence. Achievement is extensively recorded in a variety of formats, including daily records in the residences and in partner colleges, as well as in termly reviews. These records show that learners often make good progress and become more independent, although more needs to be done to ensure that the recording captures progress and achievements, rather than activities covered. The college does not have a central record, and cannot adequately demonstrate distance travelled by learners without consulting many sources of information. The recognising and recording of progress and achievement (RARPA) stages are implemented, but the quality of the documentation is not yet verified by systematic internal moderation. The college has recently appointed a management information systems manager to develop a central record.

What progress has been made in providing literacy and numeracy support?	Reasonable progress
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Provision has improved. The college has appointed a skills for life co-ordinator, who started in September 2007, and a tutor for maths and information and communication technology (ICT). All learners for whom it is appropriate have completed an initial assessment and diagnostic assessment. Currently 30 learners are being supported with literacy and numeracy needs. This support is provided flexibly and on an individual basis. The college is, for the first time, entering learners for external qualifications at entry level and levels 1 and 2 in literacy and numeracy and iMedia. Learners in partner colleges study key skills where offered as part of the vocational course. Pass rates for these are good. The college has introduced annual retesting on literacy and numeracy courses and the latest figures show that 63% have gone up a level over the past year.

Quality of provision

What progress has been made in developing work-related activity?	Insufficient progress
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The college has been without a transitions officer for some time, and although a part-time member of staff has recently been appointed, the college recognises that more needs to be done in this area and progress has been slow. It does not yet have a coherent plan or entitlement to work-related training for all students who could benefit. Some progress has been made. Two learners are currently on work-placements of three days a week and two have been on placements following contact with a volunteer bureau. Five learners are currently involved with a local Workstep provider with a view to finding supported placements when they leave. Four learners have a work-placement element in their vocational course at a partner college. Learners from the college have recently taken part in a trip to Paris. As part of this the learners had to fund raise and use skills such as marketing and planning. The college has identified that this kind of project would enable more learners to have internal work-related experiences and has plans to develop this aspect of the curriculum further.

Leadership and management

What progress has been made in quality improvement?	Reasonable progress
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The college is in the first year of a quality cycle that encompasses much of the provision. Monitoring activities are scheduled and reported on. Observations of learning support assistants have started, with criteria for grading. The college has an agreement with the partner colleges, which sets out expectations. It is not clear how

these expectations are evaluated. The self-assessment process is more thorough, and involves staff. Guidelines have been developed. The therapy team has implemented a clinical governance process that monitors set targets and takes action. Learner views are increasingly used to evaluate the provision. The quality improvement plan is monitored and updated.

What progress has been made in complying with equality and diversity requirements?	No discernible progress
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The college has not yet developed its policies and practices in line with the most recent equalities legislation and continues not to be compliant. The college works well to promote aspects of equality and diversity through the curriculum, and learners are well protected. All staff have safeguarding training and criminal records bureau (CRB) checks. The CRB central spreadsheet does not cover Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) guidelines.