

Lufton College Reinspection

Inspection Report January 2006

Reinspection date 29-30 January 2008

Inspection number 321922

Introduction

Lufton College was inspected in January 2006. Inspectors carried out the inspection under Section 62 of the Learning and Skills Act. The quality of provision was found to be satisfactory or better in all areas inspected, except in leadership and management which were found to be inadequate, as was the college's capacity to improve. Ofsted is responsible for re-inspecting all provision that is inadequate.

The less than satisfactory aspect was re-inspected on 29 and 30 January 2008. The outcomes of the re-inspection are as follows.

Aspect	Original grade	Re-inspection grade
Leadership and management	4	4
Capacity to improve	4	3

Context

Lufton College is an independent specialist college which provides for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The college is part of the Mencap National College. Currently, the college has 114 learners, the majority on a three year programme.

Leadership and management

Strengths

- effective restructure to improve staff accountabilities

Areas for improvement

- lack of adequate data to monitor the college's performance effectively
- failure to fully to meet the requirements of equalities legislation
- incomplete quality assurance procedures.

The college has made significant efforts to restructure the college and motivate staff. A coherent management structure with clear lines of responsibility and accountability has been introduced. This is beginning to work well. Staff speak with enthusiasm of the improved morale. They know who to go to for advice and support, and decisions can be made more quickly than was possible under the previous arrangements. However, the college has been slow to implement a management information system that can provide adequate accurate information about learners' achievements. Progress has been made, but the college is not able effectively to analyse its performance from year to year.

Quality assurance arrangements are incomplete. The arrangements for the operational aspects of the college have improved, with satisfactory meetings and reporting structures. The lesson observation scheme is well-established, with all teaching staff routinely observed, but the judgements are not sufficiently rigorous, and action planning following observations lacks rigour. The college does not yet have a system in place for the internal verification of the non-accredited provision. The college has started to implement a system for the recognition of learners' progress and achievements (RARPA), but learners do not yet have a satisfactory overall baseline from which to measure achievements, and targets are not always measurable. The current system is overly focused on course completion. The self-assessment report has not given sufficient weighting to these weaknesses.

Significant progress has been made in improving arrangements for health and safety, and the college complies with safeguarding requirements. Teachers and learning support workers are now appropriately deployed, and teaching staff, including literacy and numeracy staff, are appropriately qualified. The staffing has been strengthened by recent appointments in relation to the management of the curriculum. Early signs are encouraging, but it is too early to evaluate their overall impact.

Resources to support teaching are satisfactory. The number of computers in classrooms is adequate to meet learner need. New prefabricated classrooms have ramps to provide access for those with limited mobility. However, the implementation is incomplete, and the doors to the classrooms do not have adapted access. Signage around the campus is poor in some areas.

Governors, supported by Mencap national managers, have increased their challenge to senior managers and now require detailed action plans to support key developments. However, although they have undertaken training to update their knowledge of equality and diversity, they have not ensured the day-to-day implementation of policies and monitoring of equal opportunities, and have not required the college to provide adequate data, or to have adequate action plans to address any shortfalls in performance or recruitment. The college continues to fail to implement race equality requirements.

Capacity to improve

The college's capacity to improve the quality of its provision is now satisfactory. The staffing structure is more appropriate to the delivery of the curriculum and a large number of appropriately qualified and experienced new staff has recently been appointed. Early signs are that these appointments are having a positive impact. The self-assessment report for 2006/07 is generally accurate in its overall judgements and areas for improvement, but does not give sufficient weighting to some continuing areas for development. The development plans demonstrate that the college knows what needs to be improved. However, not all of the improvements have had

time to impact on the college's performance, and progress has been slow in monitoring this.

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

The college has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection, and fully addressed around half of the weaknesses identified in the previous inspection report. Of these, improvements to health and safety, changes to improve management accountabilities and the deployment of teaching staff and support staff have contributed to an improvement in staff morale, and staff are committed to the new vision. Teaching resources have improved. All other areas have been partially addressed, but not all of these are yet satisfactory.

MONITORING VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Name of college: Lufton College
Date of visit: 29 January 2008

Context

Lufton College is an independent specialist college for learners with learning difficulties. It currently has 106 learners of whom 8 are day learners. This monitoring visit is being carried out at the same time as a re-inspection of leadership and management.

Achievement and standards

What progress has been made in developing a baseline for all learners, and implementing adequate processes for non-accredited learning?	Insufficient progress
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Improvements in initial assessment have been made, but the college does not yet have a comprehensive baseline document to identify the starting point for each learner. Progress has been made in developing a database that enables the college to identify progress in relation to units of externally accredited provision, but more needs to be done to develop systems that record progress in non-accredited learning. Progress has been slow. The recognition and recording of progress and achievement (RARPA) stages, in particular target-setting, need further development. It is difficult to see how a target such as 'listen to instructions with minimal support' can be meaningfully used to record progress. The college has yet to establish a satisfactory system for the internal verification of the quality of its non-accredited provision.

What progress has been made in recording the progress of learners in skills for life?	Reasonable progress
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Since the previous monitoring visit the college has developed a baseline for each learner in literacy and numeracy. All learners attend discrete literacy and numeracy lessons and the progress in these lessons is recorded. Staff are qualified, and a new manager has recently been appointed. However, progress in other areas of the curriculum, where opportunities for consolidation or progress in developing literacy and numeracy skills occur, is

not yet adequately collated. The college is aware of this and is in the process of identifying ways in which tutors can collate outcomes across the college.

Quality of provision

What progress has been made in improving the quality of teaching and learning?	Insufficient progress
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All teaching staff are observed twice a year and from 2007/08 all learner support staff are being observed. The college's records of grading show some improvement. However the teaching and learning observation records indicate significant over-grading. Inadequate aspects of teaching are not fully recognised in the grading, and the focus of the observations is too much on teacher performance, rather than on what learners are learning and achieving. Action plans linked to the observations are inadequate and there is little sharing of good practice.

What progress has been made in promoting equality and diversity through the curriculum?	Insufficient progress
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Staff are more aware of the opportunities to promote equality and diversity but it is not, as yet, sufficiently promoted through the curriculum. Staff training is planned for February 2008 to help staff identify and give a higher profile to equality and diversity issues in lesson planning and delivery.

What progress has been made in maintaining the strength in the enrichment programme?	Significant progress
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Enrichment is still strong and has been enhanced. There is now a head of function in charge of enrichment, and it is now more structured. Enrichment forms part of the formal learning as well as being available in the evenings and at the weekends. Some enrichment activities have schemes of work and learning is formally recorded. The college continues to offer a good range of other activities such as horse riding, and for these activities a log of informal learning is kept. The learner council's role has been strengthened. They now plan and carry out a range of activities linked to equality and diversity. 'Every Child Matters' themes are mapped into the enrichment activities. For example, the cycling course/club is focused on economic well-being and enabling the learners to be mobile. The college is beginning to collaborate with three local colleges to share facilities such as sports halls, gyms and swimming pools.

What progress has been made in personalising the curriculum?	Reasonable progress
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Each learner now has an individual timetable, with long-term goals clearly identified. All learners have vocational aspects, literacy and numeracy and daily living skills on their programmes, and the college gives much emphasis to the need for work-related experience. However, each learner's individual

programme is made up of a number of discrete lessons, and without an overarching baseline, it is not clear how the whole programme is coherently brought together.

Leadership and management

What progress has been made in developing a response to equality and diversity legislation?	Insufficient progress
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The college has developed satisfactory policies in relation to equality and diversity legislation, and is in the stages of developing a single equalities policy. However, policies are not adequately monitored, and the response to the legislative requirement to monitor the progress of learners in relation to black and minority ethnic (BME) cohorts is unacceptably slow. The 2006/07 self-assessment report contains a breakdown of BME cohorts by participation, but not by outcomes. The college does not adequately monitor outcomes and does not have a strategy in response to the continuing significant under-representation of BME learners in the college.