

MONITORING VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Name of Provider: Langdon College
Date of visit: 9 June 2008

Context

Langdon College is a specialist residential and day college mostly for Jewish learners. Currently 15 residential and two day learners are enrolled, of whom 11 are male. Most learners come from the Manchester and London areas. The college is located in the heart of an active and supportive Jewish community in North Manchester. Langdon focuses on helping learners to develop independent living skills in an environment that is culturally and religiously appropriate.

Residential learners live in semi-detached houses, flats or bungalow within two miles of the college. The college has arrangements with local further education colleges and work-based learning providers to ensure that learners have access to relevant work experience.

At the previous inspection in November 2006 the college was good overall. Strengths included good achievements and standards of learners' work, effective learner focused curriculum, comprehensive initial and baseline assessment, effective promotion of the Jewish culture and community, good care and support, effective transition arrangements, good external partnerships, and good oversight by committed governors. The areas noted for improvement were the pre-entry specialist assessments, quality assurance systems, access for learners with restricted mobility, and performance management of staff.

Achievement and standards

What actions have been taken to embed recognising and recording progress and achievement (RARPA) in the residential provision? What impact has this had on the learners' residential experience?	Significant progress
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Regular recording of achievement for learners' targets by staff takes place within the residential setting. Structural changes to the staffing systems, including the appointment of RARPA champions, within the college residences have been effective in enhancing the continuity and consistency of recording progress and achievement. In addition managers have carried out unannounced supportive visits to the residences to promote the awareness of opportunities for recording learning in the

residential setting. The introduction of personal computers has helped learners to practise and reinforce previously learned independent living skills without direct staff support. In addition the college has acquired smaller, palm-top computers to provide an ongoing record of achievement and progress which can be readily accessed by the learners. These records, often learner-generated, provide further evidence to support the RARPA process. Targets for individual learners are set by staff. Consultation takes place with learners but the college is aware of the need to involve them more fully at the start of the target-setting process.

The college has introduced a detailed and graduated travel skills programme with good opportunities for increasing independence with the necessary risk assessments. The programme effectively improves the learners' general confidence and gradually increases their independence in travelling to and from college and work placements according to experience and aptitude. The college is piloting the use of MP3 players to support this process by giving the learners specific and timely reminders of the processes involved in more independent travel and to raise awareness of specific landmarks and hazards.

Quality of provision

At the last annual assessment visit the college intended to develop the teaching of personal, health and social education. What progress has been made?	Reasonable progress
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In response to the annual assessment visit, the college has established a specific timetable session for personal, health and social education. It has appointed a designated member of staff who effectively tackles a range of personal and gender issues. Additional effective professional support has been supplied by a behavioural therapist who assists specific learners to resolve confidential and sensitive issues. However, not all learners within the college have access to the full range of personal, health and social education support yet. This is planned to be fully available during the next year.

The quality improvement plans for 2007 and 2008 included plans to train staff in signing and appropriate support for non-communicating learners. What progress has been made?	Significant progress
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Since the last annual assessment visit over 60% of the staff have completed a signing course, half of whom are to complete a more advanced stage in the near future. The college has appointed a sessional speech and language therapist to develop functional communication skills with learners. This process is effectively supported by her work with other staff who reinforce the learning in a timely manner throughout the day and evening. Learners with little or no verbal communication are well supported by a good range of recently-developed electronic communicators,

electronic recording devices and laptop computers, as well as the long-established communication aides. These effectively assist the learner to remember processes for developing skills and to record progress they make. The college is aware of the need to sustain and further develop the use of the communication aides after learners have left college by exploring their potential while at college and is tackling this issue.

Leadership and management

What steps has the management taken to satisfactorily resolve requirements under the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2002, the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and Equality Act 2006?	Reasonable progress
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The college has developed plans and raised the necessary finance to install a lift at the campus site for those learners and visitors with restricted mobility. This has been delayed several times by external factors and the college has sought further tenders with a view to installing the lift later this year. The college has already adapted a dwelling for learners with restricted mobility.

Although the college was established for Jewish learners, it has agreed to accept non-Jewish learners on a day basis, and has carried out a number of initiatives with local schools and the Connexions service to promote this change in policy, though with limited impact so far.

The college has sought the impartial advice of an advisory body, involving representatives from Jewish and non-Jewish communities. This was initially established to review the college's policies, publicity materials, brochures and guidance documents to assess accessibility for current and potential learners. The body also undertook to develop impact measures relating to equalities legislation. Clear and manageable recommendations have been accepted and are being implemented. The disability equality scheme has been updated and comparative data of those with/without a disability has been included.

Have the arrangements for assuring the quality of the provision improved in coherence since the annual assessment visit in May 2007?	Reasonable progress
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The quality assurance processes have been standardised during the last year to improve coherence and understanding. A comprehensive review of the quality assurance processes for the college's residences complements the previously-existing systems for the college campus learning. The system for residences is not yet fully implemented.

An observation of teaching and learning system had been previously developed through an effective bench-marking approach with other independent specialist colleges in the region. The analysis of observations is effectively used to contribute to the college's curriculum planning process, the college's training plan, the individual tutor's training plan and staff supervision and appraisal. Unannounced supportive visits to the residences by senior managers as part of the quality improvement cycle have led to improved learning opportunities in the community and effective training and guidance for staff. Managers have supported innovative ideas arising from such visits and have been able to improve confidence in staff and learners to explore new experiences within the community. The residential key workers are playing an increasingly active part in effectively promoting continuity of approach with learners. The college is in the process of revising the learner survey format as it is too reliant on interpretation by staff.