

MONITORING VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Name of college: Fortune Centre of Riding Therapy

Date of visit: 8 July 2009

Context

The Fortune Centre of Riding Therapy is an independent specialist college of further education for young people between the ages of 16 and 25 years old. It is based in the south of England in the New Forest on three rural sites. Learners learn through their involvement with horses. They follow a three year residential Further Education through Horsemastership Course that is internally and externally accredited. At the previous inspection in March 2008 effectiveness of provision was graded satisfactory.

Achievement and standards

How much progress has been made in the number of students progressing to employment or further education?	significant progress
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Progression to further education (FE) improved last year with 62% of learners progressing to FE compared with 25% in 2007. Overall, 72% of learners progressed to FE or work-related activity compared with 58% in the previous year. However, no one in 2008 progressed to paid employment. The remainder of the learners moved to residential or other day care. A new transition programme was introduced in 2007/08. The transition programme is managed by a coordinator and all third year learners have a transition guide. Third year learners also work together as a discrete group this has enabled them to have more personalised programmes. The current third year learners have all been placed for next year subject to funding.

Achievements were also good last year with ten learners achieving NVQ level 1 in horse care. This exceeded the college target of six achievements. All learners achieved the college's own internally accredited further education through horse mastership course.

How much progress has been made in students accessing externally accredited courses?	Reasonable progress
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The college has made reasonable progress in offering externally accredited qualifications in literacy and numeracy. The college is now a registered Open College Network (OCN) Centre and is able to offer OCN qualifications in literacy, numeracy

and communication from entry level to level 1. All current third year learners took part in the OCN pilot for functional skills this year. Eight learners took English, seven took mathematics and two took information and communication technology (ICT). The work is still to be externally verified but pass rates are expected to be high. The college plan to introduce more units next year and functional skills will be offered from the first year onwards.

Quality of provision

How much progress has been made in developing more precise learning goals?	Insufficient progress
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Although the college has put in place systems to improve target-setting on learners individual learning plans too many targets are still not specific enough or measurable. The college are aware of this and have identified it as an action in their self-assessment report. Managers have audited individual learning plans and have identified where targets are not well formulated. Individual learning plans have been returned to staff with guidance to help them write more focused targets. However, staff have not had any training and development in target-setting and while the checking process is going on the learners are still working with unsuitable or poorly formulated targets. Similar problems have been identified with the working area files which cover personal care needs. Many learners are being set too many targets and many are not care related. A new system was introduced in January 2009 and clear guidelines for completing working area files issued to all relevant staff. A recent review of the system showed 81% of the staff found the system much improved and felt it had led to better monitoring of learners progress in self-care.

There is a literacy and numeracy tutor linked to each group of learners who now work alongside teaching staff in all areas to help the embedding of literacy and numeracy targets into the curriculum. This includes the work in the stable yard.

Leadership and management

How much progress has been made in developing management information systems (MIS) and using data more effectively to monitor performance?	Reasonable progress
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The college has purchased a new database and appointed a part-time project manager to manage the introduction of the new management information system. A clear project plan incorporates an implementation plan and action log. Some data has been uploaded on to the database, such as destination data and basic learner information. The database will be introduced from September 2009 and is to be piloted in one area before being fully rolled out across the college in 2010/11. All staff are to be trained in using the database. The college does have more data now than at the time of the previous inspection and is doing more analysis of different groups including an analysis by disability. The results of the analysis are reported to the quality and standards committee that reports to the trustees.

How much progress has been made in quality assuring the college's main non-accredited programme?	Reasonable progress
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The college has worked hard to put in place appropriate quality assurance processes for their own internally accredited course. Internal verification processes are in place that mirror the verification processes for externally accredited courses. All internal verifiers are British Horse Society registered and have to attend external updating every two years. The college has also mapped and benchmarked their course against appropriate external awards. The observation of teaching and learning scheme has been strengthened. Staff are trained to carry out observations and all staff are observed at least once a year. Where issues are identified support is put in place and another observation undertaken at a later date. Training for peer observations has recently started and staff who have been identified as outstanding meet to share good practice. From September, staff who have been identified as outstanding or very good in an area will lead on staff development and training to help other staff improve.