

MONITORING VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Name of college: Loppington College

Date of visit: 5 March 2009

Context

Loppington College is a residential independent specialist college situated in north Shropshire. It is privately owned by Active Care Partnerships Limited, a specialist division of Southern Cross Health Care. It provides further education for learners aged 19-25 years with severe learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There are nine residential and three day learners from the local area, all funded by the Learning and Skills Council. It was inspected in March 2008 and was judged to be satisfactory overall. The college's mission stated in the 2007/08 self-assessment report is 'Striving for independence in life work and leisure'.

Achievement and standards

How well do learners progress through the recording and setting of targets?	Reasonable progress
---	---------------------

The setting of targets for learners' achievement has improved. The simplified curriculum provides a more coherent framework on which to base fewer and more focused learning targets for learners to succeed. Learning objectives are shared across the residential and day provision which enables learners to achieve at a faster pace. Short-term targets are more precise and progress by learners is more measurable. The college recognise that staff skills in devising targets linked to medium and long-term goals is an area for further improvement. Robust monitoring of the quality of target setting is successfully identifying where further work needs to be done.

Quality of provision

Have opportunities for learners to develop skills for independent living improved?	Significant progress
--	----------------------

Opportunities for learners to develop independent living skills have greatly increased. The new curriculum framework is clearly focused on developing these skills through work, life and leisure and incorporated into all curriculum activities. The link between residential and day provision is much stronger and ensures a more holistic approach

to independence skills development. Staff work within both residences and day provision, which provides continuity and appropriate reinforcement of skills across the day and residential provision. The learners have a stronger community presence through their attendance at the SPACE retail unit at Ellesmere. This increases the opportunities for them to practise independence skills by using the facilities and amenities within the town.

Leadership and management

Has the suitability of teaching and residential accommodation improved?	Significant progress
---	----------------------

Teaching and residential accommodation is now fit for purpose and sufficient for the number of learners catered for. The college has started an extensive refurbishment programme which is already having a major impact on the learning environment. College and adult provision is now separate and there is no longer a need to share teaching and living space. Residential accommodation is now equipped with suitable kitchen facilities to enable learners to practice their independence skills. The acquisition of the retail unit at Ellesmere has freed valuable teaching space at the college site.

Does the college now set clear and rigorous performance targets for improvement?	Reasonable progress
--	---------------------

The college have recently developed key performance indicators in line with areas identified for improvement within the 2007/08 self-assessment report. Most of these provide clear targets for the college to achieve within prescribed timescales. However, a few are imprecise and couched only in terms of actions to be taken rather than also identifying the outcomes to be achieved. It is too early to gauge if these will have an impact on college performance although quality assurance is much more robust and progress towards achieving these targets can now be measured.

Do staff have sufficient specialist expertise?	Insufficient progress
--	-----------------------

The college has organised a range of staff training and development in relevant areas to improve the skills of staff. Work has been done to integrate behaviour strategies into lessons and in the setting of learning targets which meet the needs of the range of learners with complex needs. The college have set targets to ensure that staff obtain the required qualifications. However, the college recognise that staff expertise needs to be further developed to ensure improvements continue to be made to the quality of teaching and learning.

What progress has been made in ensuring Active Care have sufficient oversight of the college?	Reasonable progress
---	---------------------

Communication and reporting processes are now more embedded to ensure the parent company are aware at all times of the quality of college provision. The recent formation of an advisory board has the potential to provide good critical oversight so

that progress towards the key performance indicators can be reviewed and improvements sustained.