

## MONITORING VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Name of college: Farleigh Further Education College, Swindon  
Date of visit: 2 June 2009

### Context

Farleigh Further Education College Swindon was established in September 2004 as part of the Priory Group. The college caters for 40 learners who have Asperger's syndrome two thirds of whom 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, by subcontracting to local mainstream providers. Learners have access to an extensive range of academic and vocational options combined with opportunities to develop independence and social 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

How much progress has been made in developing central systems for capturing all aspects of learners' progress?	Reasonable progress
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Learners continue to achieve their primary learning goals well, with good results on mainstream college courses at all levels. At the time of the last monitoring visit, the college was in the very early stages of developing its systems to capture other aspects of learners' progress, such as communication skills and independent living skills, which are considered essential by the college to enable learners to progress to mainstream destinations. Reasonable progress has been made in developing these systems, and support workers have a better understanding of ways in which they can assist learners to improve their communication and independence skills. The college has developed a range of spreadsheets to show progress, and is better able to use data to identify trends, areas of strength and areas which need further investigation. The college is now in a better position to identify its overall progress year on year, as well as producing more informative individual learner records. The college is successfully developing ways of involving parents in supporting these outcomes. However, the computerised database needs further development and does not yet meet the college's information requirements.

## Quality of provision

How much progress has been made in enabling learners to increase their involvement in work experience?	Significant progress
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At the previous monitoring visit, insufficient progress had been made in developing opportunities for work related activity. The learner cohort has changed, with fewer learners taking GCE A levels, and more following vocational courses at all levels. The need for employment related activity has become more important in the college. Significant progress has been made. The college has improved its transition planning and introduced a 'transitions curriculum'. Learners are involved from the outset in deciding what type of work experience they would like to try. All learners now have some form of work related experience, either within the college or externally. The college recognises that many of their learners need to try out different possibilities, as they learn best from experience. A learner's recognition that an area of work is not suitable is seen as a positive phase of learning. All of the nine learners who will be leaving the college shortly have had work experience. Four learners who live locally and for whom assisted employment is one of their primary goals, have been working with a local supported employment agency. They have the option of continuing on a full-time basis with the agency when they leave college. All have gained sufficient self-confidence to attend the placement without a support worker. The college is planning to develop its own enterprises.

## Leadership and management

How much progress has been made in evaluating the quality improvement arrangements in relation to subcontracted provision in partner colleges?	Reasonable progress
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The college subcontracts all of its educational provision to two partner colleges. Four learners are currently studying in New College Swindon, and the others in Swindon GFE. Teaching staff are provided with a pen portrait of learners from Farleigh College and a curriculum profile which includes any adjustments that need to be made for examinations. Learners have regular tutorials in partner colleges, and are involved in their own progress reviews. Farleigh College carries out observations of its support workers in the classroom. However, the partnership agreements lack clarity and have omissions in terms of specific expectations. Farleigh College staff do not carry out their own observations or joint observations in partner colleges.

How much progress has been made in developing and implementing equality and diversity policies?	Reasonable progress
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At the previous monitoring visit the college had not updated its policies to reflect the requirements of the most recent equalities legislation. The college has now developed a single equalities policy which reflects the main requirements of the legislation. Members of staff have followed an on-line programme of staff development in relation to the legislation, and further staff training is planned in a

few weeks. Specific events have been organised for learners, such as holocaust memorial day, that effectively raised issues for discussion about discrimination. These events are evaluated by learners in terms of what they have learnt. Learners have not made any complaints about equality and diversity issues. The college has made a start in carrying out impact assessments of its policies and is in the process of evaluating its action plan for the year. However learners are not represented on the equality and diversity committee, and the college currently has no learners from racial or minority ethnic backgrounds. The current arrangements for promoting equality and diversity are not systematic and more needs to be done to ensure that all learners leave the college with a better understanding of equality issues before moving on, mostly to mainstream environments. Arrangements for vetting staff are sound and the college now has a central record as required.