

## MONITORING VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Name of college: St John's College

Date of visit: 11 June 2009

### Context

St John's College is an independent specialist college providing further education (FE). The college is part of the St John's School and College, which has charitable status. It aims to provide a transitional phase for learners between the ages of 16 and 23 who have complex learning difficulties and/or disabilities so that they may be enabled to become increasingly independent citizens. There are currently 88 learners, 53 of whom are male. Of these learners, 52 are funded through the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). The college is divided into three faculties: LINC (living, interaction and communication) for young adults with more severe autistic spectrum disorders; Life Skills where learners with severe learning difficulties focus more exclusively on independent living skills; and AVOC (academic and vocational studies) where learners have more moderate difficulties.

### Achievement and standards

How much progress has been made using the new centralised system to improve the recording of all learners' progress?	Reasonable progress
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Reasonable progress has been made with implementing the centralised system and it is now being used to record learners' progress against targets. Overall targets are identified during annual reviews and recorded on individual learning plans that are made available on the centralised system. Staff set programme and care targets separately and the college is planning to make further improvements by using the same format for both to ensure this data is captured on the centralised system. Staff and learners formally review targets each term where targets may be re-set if appropriate. At the present time, although management has access to the system, staff are not able directly to use the centralised system to record learners' targets and progress made against them. Management are currently making further improvements to enable them to take more responsibility to do this. The system provides management with a range of useful data that is regularly monitored and analysed for trends in progress as well as for quality issues. This has enabled the college to identify areas of staff development and as a result staff have recently received training in target-setting.

## Quality of provision

How successful has the review of programmes been in developing and improving the curriculum for all learners?	Significant progress
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The college has developed its curriculum offer significantly since the previous inspection. The Crypt café is being particularly well used and by more learners. Plans are in place to expand the provision to include a retail outlet for crafts produced by learners. Very good use is made of the café for fundraising events, implemented by learners' suggestions. Food is provided for the café that was produced by learners during food studies classes. A new land based provision, concentrating mainly on horticulture, is currently being developed on the Seaford campus and will be available from the start of the next academic year. Outdoor pursuits courses and extended sports and leisure options will also be available next year. The college regularly reacts very positively to the individual needs of learners and this year has provided opportunities for learners to study towards GCSE science and information and communication technology (ICT) and AS level mathematics for two learners. From September 2009 GCSE drama is also offered.

## Leadership and management

How much progress has been made to improve the college's response and implementation of equalities and diversity policies?	Significant progress
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The college has made significant progress in its response and implementation of its equality and diversity policies. All policies and action plans have been reviewed and revised over the past year. Three new audit documents have been developed to assist in reviewing equality and diversity, race equality and inclusion. Two of these have been trialled with senior managers and with some staff currently studying towards teaching qualifications. The college is currently waiting for approval for planned accessibility improvements on the campus. All senior managers and governors were involved in reviewing equality and diversity during a formal training day at the beginning of the academic year. Staff induction includes equality and diversity issues. Staff have also received updated training on issues covering disability, gender, race and sexual orientation. The governing body is now fully involved in reviewing progress against equality and diversity policies and action plans. Management provide governors with termly reports on progress and issues. Management use data well to analyse trends in achievement of different groups of learners as well as data on learners who have indicated an interest in the college against actual enrolments. The college is aware of the low number of learners who apply and enrol at the college from minority ethnic backgrounds and have revised their publicity materials to positively highlight the diverse backgrounds of learners.

How successfully do the views of learners, parents, carers, staff and governors inform the college's self-assessment process?	Reasonable progress
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The college uses a variety of methods to seek the views of stakeholders and has made reasonable progress in ensuring that these views help develop its self-assessment process. Learners are encouraged to give their views via questionnaires, through the student council forum and the pre-annual review response form, as well as during house meetings for those who are residential learners. The college is planning to make a proposal at the next governors' meeting for a co-opted learner to join the governing body. Management analyse learners' views thoroughly and take action where they are able. Parents' views are sought before annual reviews of learners and through their regular communication with college staff. However, the college acknowledges that there is more to do to ensure that feedback from parents and carers is obtained and are currently considering additional ways of doing this. Staff and governors were satisfactorily involved in the self-assessment process during a scheduled training day.