

MONITORING VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Name of college: Regent College

Date of visit: 12 June 2009

Context

Regent college (the college) is an independent specialist college offering day provision for learners aged 16-25 years. Currently, there are approximately 30 learners who are funded directly by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). The college was established in 1999 by Shelton Care Limited to meet the needs of learners who could not access mainstream further education. All young people attending the college have learning difficulties ranging from moderate to severe. The college operates from one building in Stoke-on-Trent. The educational programme is aimed at developing learners' independence skills through individual programmes, and uses a range of local facilities for community awareness, leisure, recreation and gardening. The college does not have a board of governors but is overseen by the two directors of Shelton Care Limited.

At the previous inspection in November 2007, the college was judged to be satisfactory. Key aspects such as achievement and standards, quality of provision and leadership and management were also judged to be satisfactory.

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve national awards and make progress towards their long term goals?	Significant progress
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Opportunities for learners to gain relevant and meaningful national awards in independence, basic skills, communication and vocational skills have increased significantly since the previous inspection. The awards are carefully chosen to match individual learner's long term goals. Pass rates on courses are high. Although progress toward higher level courses is not yet sufficiently analysed, most make progress through the different levels of awards on offer from pre-entry to level 2. Learners enjoy achieving the various awards and certificates and as a result gain in confidence and self-esteem. There are examples of how learners make very good progress, and through the considerable improvements they make in their social and communication skills, integrate successfully into mainstream further education, supported work placements or employment. However, a thorough analysis of how well learners make progress beyond expectations from their initial starting points towards their long term goals is yet to be made.

What progress has been made in the quality of target setting for achievements and tracking of individual learners' progress?	Reasonable progress
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The improved system, introduced in September 2008, to track learners' progress, is starting to impact positively on learners' achievements. Learning targets are more precise and progress towards these is now being tracked successfully. The introduction of an electronic individual learning plan allows teachers and tutors to recognise learners' achievements more speedily. This is shared across all curriculum activities so that both tutors and learners are much more aware and involved in identifying the progress being made. Recent data show that there has been a marked increase in the number of targets learners are achieving. Individual learning targets are more rigorously monitored for quality and staff receive ongoing support where issues which need to be addressed are identified. Tutorials are held regularly to involve learners more fully in evaluating their own progress, although tutorial documents do not always capture progress against individual learning targets well enough.

Quality of provision

Has session planning improved since the previous inspection?	Reasonable progress
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Individual learning objectives for learners to achieve are successfully included within session planning and in most cases are effectively adapted to the activity being undertaken. Learners are more involved in planning their own learning during sessions. Clear quality indicators have been devised and used by observers during lesson observations and grades have improved since the previous inspection. Together with the individual learning objectives, tutors are required to identify the skills being developed during the planned activities as well as other information including teaching strategies and basic skills development. Although most of the information contained within a session plan is very useful, session plans are over complicated and time consuming for the tutors to devise. Also, insufficient focus is given in session planning to how tasks and activities are differentiated and allocated appropriately to meet individual learners' needs.

Leadership and management

Has staff expertise improved in meeting the complexity of learners' needs and has the proportion of staff with appropriate qualifications increased since the previous inspection?	Reasonable progress
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Improvements made to levels of staff expertise and qualifications have improved satisfactorily since the previous inspection. The quality of teaching and learning according to the lesson observation grade profile, verified by external observers, has improved much. Staff are undertaking appropriate qualifications and courses and most tutors have a recognised teaching qualification. Recruitment processes involve

learners and are more rigorously applied. There has been an increased focus on improving staff skills in developing learners' communication skills. For example, staff have all had, or are about to receive, training in the use of Makaton as a means of communication. Improvements in staff performance are closely monitored and targets are set for individual tutors to improve aspects of their teaching. Individual support is provided to staff to meet their performance targets. However, the college recognises that the skills of staff are still in need of further development, particularly in planning for learning.

<p>What progress has been made in the monitoring and evaluation of how well equality and diversity are being promoted by the college?</p>	<p>Reasonable progress</p>
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Equality and diversity are promoted effectively and actions have been successful in raising staff and learners' awareness of the different religions, cultures, and backgrounds of minority ethnic groups. Impact assessments to evaluate the effectiveness of policies and procedures are being undertaken and the college is committed to achieving an externally validated investors in diversity award. A single equality scheme is being developed to combine all three strategies which include disability, race and gender. Achievements of these different groups are analysed effectively. However, the diversity action plan, although effectively mapped against the investors in diversity indicators, does not give sufficient focus to equality and diversity issues in relation to the educational provision. The action plan does not identify targets to enable the college to monitor or evaluate sufficiently how successful the actions have been in the promotion of equality and diversity.