

## MONITORING VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Name of college: Oakwood Court College  
Date of visit: 27 February 2008

### Context

Oakwood Court College is an independent residential specialist college, which is part of Education and Care (Devon) Ltd., a company founded by the former principal, who is now the Chief Executive. The college was opened in 1998 at its present site, and is based in the seaside town of Dawlish in Devon. In 2000, a further residence, Fairfield House along with Fairfield Cottage, was opened and the college now operates on the two sites, situated approximately two miles apart. A further 6 bedded residential unit is situated in walking distance of the main site at 1 Oak Park Villas. The company also provides residential and supported living care services within the locality. The college aims to meet the needs of young people, aged 16 to 25, with moderate and severe learning difficulties who may also have associated complex needs. These include challenging behaviours, autistic spectrum disorders and speech and language difficulties. Following the retirement of the previous principal in July 2007 a new principal was appointed in January 2008.

### Achievement and standards

|  |                      |
|--|----------------------|
| What judgments can be made about learners' achievements? | Significant progress |
|--|----------------------|

Achievements are good. All except one learner had achieved both internally and externally accredited awards. One learner had achieved internally accredited awards only. The range of awards achieved is extensive. Internal accreditation covers practical life skills such as cooking and cycling as well as skills such as digital photography, Tae Kwon Do, music and information technology (IT). External accreditation covers qualifications in, for example, IT, Duke of Edinburgh Awards, digital photography and awards for volunteering.

|  |                     |
|--|---------------------|
| What judgements can be made about the destination of leavers in 2006/07? | Reasonable progress |
|--|---------------------|

The college has made reasonable progress in developing the transition arrangements for learners. Eight learners left the college in July 2007, all of whom are in either voluntary unpaid employment or are attending further education colleges. All are living in appropriate accommodation suitable to their individual needs. The transition arrangements have been further improved this year. A new role of transition facilitator was created and a post holder has been in place since October 2007. Transition plans are in place and are fully supported by a development plan. All learners who are due to leave in 2008 have detailed action plans. It is, though, too early to fully judge the impact of the new processes.

|  |                     |
|--|---------------------|
| What progress has the college made in improving the recording of learners' overall progress? | Reasonable progress |
|--|---------------------|

The college has introduced a new management information system which has been in place since November 2007. Much information has been put onto the new system. However, information which will enable the college to have full oversight of learners' overall progress will not be on the system until September 2008. It is therefore too early to judge the impact of the new system.

#### Quality of provision

|   |                     |
|---|---------------------|
| What analysis of literacy, numeracy and communication requirements in different working environments has taken place since the re-inspection? | Reasonable progress |
|---|---------------------|

Each work-skill area has started to recognise which specific literacy, numeracy and communication skills they need for their particular environment. All staff have been supported to do this by the skills for life co-ordinator. Revised schemes of work are in the process of being developed. The speech and language therapist has identified key communication skills needed within different work placements. All staff have had training on understanding skills for life and how to embed them within their sessions. All

curriculum areas set relevant literacy, numeracy and communication targets for the learners to work on. However, this has led to too many targets being set for each learner. The college recognises this and is currently streamlining the process. The system for recording progress against targets at subject level is effective but the method used is lengthy and overly complex. The college is addressing this issue through the introduction of the new management information system. Currently there is insufficient analysis of literacy, numeracy and communication targets.

|  |                     |
|--|---------------------|
| What progress has been made in developing skills and setting targets in the extended curriculum? | Reasonable progress |
|--|---------------------|

Reasonable progress has been made with developing skills and setting targets within the extended curriculum. Targets are set for daily living skills, community and leisure, and personal care. They are personalised and negotiated between the learner, key worker and tutor. The targets are real and meaningful and help to develop independent skills. The staff have received training in how to set targets. The extended curriculum co-coordinator is responsible for monitoring the achievement of the targets. At present, literacy, numeracy and communication targets are not used in the extended curriculum. The college has identified this as an area that they wish to develop.

#### Leadership and management

|  |                     |
|--|---------------------|
| What progress has the college made in identifying and recording how effectively specific interventions are being implemented by teaching and support staff, and how effectively results from specialist dyslexia assessments are being used in teaching? | Reasonable progress |
|--|---------------------|

The college has made reasonable progress in identifying and recording how specific interventions are being implemented by teaching and support staff. Individual learner needs are assessed and identified. In addition all learners receive a dyslexia assessment. Outcomes lead to strategies that are communicated to all staff through meetings and the individual learning support programme. Resources are adapted and deployed accordingly. The interventions are monitored through regular meetings and through the skills for life lesson observations in the autumn term. However, the interventions are not routinely observed in the newly introduced teaching and learning

observation reports. The personal, social and support co-coordinator is responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of the implementation of specific interventions, but the college recognises that it needs to formalise their approach to monitoring. All staff have received specialised dyslexic training. Every learner has had their learning style identified. Lesson activities are adapted accordingly to accommodate different learning styles. All tutors are encouraged to use a multi-sensory approach to teaching and learning.

|   |                       |
|---|-----------------------|
| How effectively are the college using the information from observations of teaching and learning to inform staff training and development activities? | Insufficient progress |
|---|-----------------------|

The last monitoring visit identified that the college does not produce a plan to show how it will address teaching and learning issues identified as a result of its observations. At the time of this monitoring visit the college had still not fully addressed this issue. A large number of literacy and numeracy lessons were observed between September and December 2007 and issues identified in the observations were addressed individually with the appropriate teachers. A new observation of teaching and learning report was introduced in January 2008 and has been used to complete a small number of observations. The new report is very complex and does not sufficiently focus on the learners' experiences. There is very little information about the actual content of the lesson so it is difficult to know what the learners are doing in the lesson and whether they are working at an appropriate level and are fully engaged in learning. Each aspect of the lesson is graded by a percentage score and the information is used to determine an overall grade. It is difficult to judge the accuracy of the grading of the observations as the form is complex and no overall picture emerges from the information. There are plans to use the information from the observations to help inform continuing professional development for staff, but at the time of the inspection the plans had not been implemented.