

Langdon College

Focused monitoring visit report

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Type of provider: Independent specialist college

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FOCUSED MONITORING VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Context and focus of visit

Langdon College, located in North Manchester, is an independent specialist residential college for Jewish students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Those attending Langdon College come from the major national Jewish communities, mainly from Manchester and London. There are currently 11 male and nine female students on roll; 16 are residential and they live in semi-detached houses or flats within walking distance of the college. All students are white British; the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) funds all placements. The college had a monitoring visit in March 2009 and was inspected by Ofsted in November 2006; it was judged to be good overall. The college's primary focus is on helping students to develop independent living skills in an environment that is culturally and religiously appropriate. To achieve this, Langdon College promotes a Jewish ethos based on the concept of Judaism as a way of life and provides an environment where the knowledge and skills required to lead an appropriate Jewish lifestyle with the minimum of support can be developed through the normal rhythm of the Jewish calendar and through strict adherence to Jewish customs and protocols.

Themes

Self-assessment and improvement planning

What is the college's capacity to make and sustain improvements? How effective is self-assessment and improvement planning?

Significant progress

Highly effective actions have been taken to address the issues raised at the November 2006 inspection and subsequent monitoring visits. Over the past year there has been an increased focus on improving the quality of the provision. The process of self-assessment is thorough and very well managed and the resulting report is comprehensive and effectively aligned to the new Common Inspection Framework. The lesson observation scheme, which was implemented as part of a peer review development programme with other North West independent specialist colleges (ISCs), is promoting improvement effectively. For example, the quality of teaching and learning has risen steadily so that in 2008/09 80% of sessions observed were judged to be good or better. As part of the LSC's Framework for Excellence pilot scheme the college has been successfully working in partnership to develop the Individual Learner Record and also helping to develop the ISCs' contribution to the learner voice questionnaire. The college has good governance, effective management structures and appropriate arrangements in place to monitor both the work of the governing body and the principal.

Outcomes for learners

How well is the college continuing to improve outcomes for learners since the last visit? Significant progress

Students attending Langdon College achieve well. The implementation of the framework for recognising and recording progress and achievement (RARPA) is well embedded in the comprehensive planning cycle. Since the last visit, the college has further differentiated target setting so that targets now provide a higher level of challenge. All students have literacy, numeracy or communication targets embedded in a range of practical sessions. Assessment processes are rigorous and effective individual learning programmes are developed in conjunction with each student. There is good achievement, with 69% of all targets being achieved across all areas. The outcome for externally accredited awards in 2008/09 was 100%. There is very little difference in the achievement levels of various groups. Destination data from 2008/09 indicate that all leavers were successful in achieving their long term goals; for example, of the eight students who left, three went into open employment, two to a mixed package of part-time work and further study, one to voluntary work, one to part-time study and one entered a Yeshiva. Students' achievements are successfully recognised; for example, through the photographic displays of their work around the college and by college certificates and national awards.

Quality of provision

How well has the college responded to its legislative requirements with regard to equality and diversity legislation? Reasonable progress

The self-assessment process accurately identifies that the college has made reasonable progress with regard to improvements in the promotion of equality and diversity. All staff have received training in this area. Equality impact assessments, together with associated action plans, are well managed and policies and procedures are regularly reviewed. A rigorous assessment process ensures that students are able to access all aspects of college life. The installation of a lift over the summer has supported this process. All staff regularly participate in the college's equality and diversity training programme. Governors receive information on the progress of equality schemes and action plans, but the reporting is not sufficiently detailed or regular. A governor with responsibility for equality and diversity has recently been appointed. Whist teachers do include relevant activities and material in planning their work, the college does not have a cross-college curriculum framework for this area. Students are well represented on the equality and diversity committee. They report back to other students informally, but plans are in place to make reporting systems more accessible for all students, for example in a pictorial format.

Leadership and management

How effectively does the college monitor the effectiveness of its arrangements to promote health and safety? Reasonable progress

There are robust policies and practices in place for the protection of the 16 to 18 age group and vulnerable young adults, which conform to the requirements of the local safeguarding board. The college has a good record of monitoring risk through the health and safety committee and an annual audit by an external company. There are effective links with a wide range of other organisations. Detailed, comprehensive individual and generic risk assessments are conducted for all programmes.

Nominated health and safety staff are relevantly qualified through the Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH). The safeguarding of all students is given high priority and staff are regularly well trained. Whilst there are two nominated and trained governors for safeguarding, the rest of the governing body has yet to receive training in this area. However, it is planned for later this term. Strict policies on anti-bullying/discrimination and on internet safety are well promoted. The college is rigorous in its application of Criminal Record Bureau checks (CRB) for all staff and the single central vetting and recruitment record is regularly monitored.

How well has the college developed its learner involvement strategy? What progress has been made in gathering the views of learners to improve provision? Significant progress

The college now has a comprehensive formal learner involvement strategy and students are fully involved in the college's decision making processes. They are actively engaged on safeguarding, health and safety, equality and diversity, curriculum and care and support committees, including attendance at governors' meetings. An effective and wide range of partnership working with local Salford colleges has helped to increase and develop the use of mobile learning technology and further promote achievements. The views of students are actively sought through weekly house and student forum meetings, the results of which help to identify further improvements to be made. Students and parents have confidence in personal tutors, key workers and managers to help them to resolve day-to-day issues that may arise. Tutorials, review meetings and course evaluations are also used successfully to gather student views. Student forum meetings are well recorded in both written and Makaton formats.

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