

Hinwick Hall College

Inspection report

Provider reference 133098
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Background information

Inspection judgements

Grading

Inspectors use a four-point scale to summarise their judgements about achievement and standards, the quality of provision, and leadership and management, which includes a grade for equality of opportunity.

The descriptors for the four grades are:

- *grade 1 – outstanding*
- *grade 2 – good*
- *grade 3 – satisfactory*
- *grade 4 – inadequate*

Further information can be found on how inspection judgements are made at www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Scope of the inspection

In deciding the scope of this inspection, inspectors took account of: the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans; comments from the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC) or other funding body; and where appropriate the previous inspection report (www.ofsted.gov.uk); reports from the inspectorate annual assessment visits or quality monitoring inspection; and data on learners and their achievement over the period since the last inspection. This inspection focused on the following aspects:

- overall effectiveness of the organisation and its capacity to improve further
- achievement and standards
- quality of provision
- leadership and management.

Description of the provider

1. Hinwick Hall is a specialist independent residential college situated in North Bedfordshire, on the border with Northamptonshire. The college forms part of the national Grooms-Shaftesbury charity and provides for learners with complex communication, physical and learning difficulties. In total there are 34 learners funded by the Learning Skills Council. Of these, there are 16 male and 11 female residential learners aged 19 years and over and two female residential learners aged 16 to 18 years. There are five male day learners all aged 19 years and over. Three learners come from minority ethnic backgrounds.
2. The college's overall aim is to provide 'the best possible education and training for young people who have exceptional learning needs brought about by physical, learning, communication and/or sensory disabilities'. The college's philosophy is Christian in which 'the unique value of every person is respected'. The curriculum offers a wide range of activities based on the development of life and work skills and includes creative arts, independence skills, literacy, numeracy, communications, information and communication technology (ICT) and horticulture.
3. The current senior management team are in interim posts, pending the outcome of the re-inspection. There has been considerable restructuring of management and staff roles which has led to some redundancies within the college to reflect the reduction in learner numbers over the past year.

Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision	Satisfactory: Grade 3
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Capacity to improve	Satisfactory: Grade 3
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Achievement and standards	Satisfactory: Grade 3
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Quality of provision	Satisfactory: Grade 3
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Leadership and management	Satisfactory: Grade 3
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<i>Equality of opportunity</i>	<i>Satisfactory: contributory grade 3</i>
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Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Satisfactory: Grade 3

4. The overall effectiveness of the college is satisfactory and agrees with the college's own self-assessment. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Learners make good progress in developing their communication skills, confidence and self-esteem. The standard of learners' work is good. The recording and reporting of learner progress in relation to learning targets within individual learners' programmes is underdeveloped. Learners' development of work-related skills is limited.
5. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Learners enjoy the activities within lessons, which are planned well to take into account individual learning targets. Where support given to learners during lessons is over directive, learners do not develop the skills needed to direct their own learning sufficiently. Although communication skills are successfully integrated within lessons, there is no clear strategy to embed literacy and numeracy skills so that they can be developed in relevant and meaningful ways.
6. The college provides a satisfactory range of programmes to meet the individual needs and interests of learners. Programmes are focused and designed with a strong emphasis on the development of learners' communication skills. Learners individual learning plans (ILPs) ensure learners' programmes are linked to the achievement of long term goals. However, these are not as successfully implemented within the learners' residences. Work experience opportunities are limited as are links with local education and training providers. Educational and social inclusion are satisfactory.
7. Support and guidance for learners are satisfactory. As well as good support for learners to develop their communication skills, the college provides a good range of specialist therapists to provide for the needs of learners with complex needs. There is effective personal support for learners. However, tutorial records are underdeveloped and do not identify learner progress well enough.
8. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The interim senior management team (SMT) have worked hard and effectively with staff to bring about key improvements in provision. Quality assurance has improved but the observations of lessons to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning is not yet fully established. Self-assessment involves all staff and identifies areas for improvement which are clearly linked to improvement planning. The college provides satisfactory value for money.

Capacity to improve

Satisfactory: Grade 3

9. The interim SMT with the full commitment of staff have together demonstrated they can effect improvements rapidly. Quality assurance is being further developed. The self-assessment report (SAR) is satisfactory and broadly

accurate, and clearly linked to quality improvement planning. However, the strengths identified within the SAR are overstated in a few cases. The quality improvement plan is adequate to bring about further improvements. Resources are adequate with sufficient lecturers, therapists and support staff to carry through its plans for improvement. There is a comprehensive succession plan developed to ensure the effective transition from an interim to permanent senior management team.

The effectiveness of the steps taken by the college to promote improvement since the last inspection

10. The college has made satisfactory progress to improve provision since the last inspection when judged to be inadequate. The pace of improvements taken has improved significantly with the appointment of the interim SMT. Most areas for improvement have been successfully addressed. The college is effectively implementing quality assurance in line with recognising and recording of progress and achievement (RARPA) which has resulted in improved assessment processes, target setting, teaching and learning, and transition planning. The quality assurance of lesson observations is not yet fully embedded. The proportion of staff with specialist expertise has increased recently. The college now meets the requirements of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2002 (SENDA) and Equality Act 2006.

Key strengths

- good development of communication skills, confidence and self-esteem
- good standards of learners' work
- learners' enjoyment and engagement in learning
- good support for communication skill development
- the high levels of commitment demonstrated by senior managers and staff in improving the quality of provision.

Areas for improvement

The college should address:

- consistency in the quality of target setting
- the effectiveness of the integration of literacy and numeracy skills within lessons
- the development of work experience opportunities
- links with employers and educational providers
- the embedding of internal lesson observation quality assurance processes.

Main findings

Achievement and standards

Satisfactory: Grade 3

11. Learners' achievement is satisfactory overall. Inspectors agree with the college's judgement that learners make good progress in the development of their communication skills, confidence and self-esteem. They learn to take turns, listen to others and express themselves effectively. Learners, where appropriate, develop successful strategies to improve and manage their own behaviour. Their independence skills improve and they are more able to cook, shop, budget and care for their own personal needs. Learners develop skills in a range of creative arts and produce work to a good standard. The paintings, pottery and photographs of their creative achievements are displayed extensively around the college and within local and national galleries.
12. Learners follow courses leading to external qualifications in life and social skills and are successful in gaining qualifications in line with their individual learning plans. The introduction of the new curriculum framework has improved the identification of learning targets for learners to achieve. However, the college recognises that the recording and reporting of learners' progress is an area for further improvement. In a few cases, learning targets are not consistently worded and are too general to measure progress by. Learners' achievement in literacy and numeracy skills are also insufficiently recorded.
13. The development of learners' work-related skills is satisfactory within curriculum subject areas. However, these are not sufficiently reinforced due to the limited opportunities afforded to practise these skills in real working environments. Learners' progress to further education and training after leaving college is satisfactory. Many are able to secure suitable living, education and day-time provision. However, only a few progress onto some form of employment. Attendance and retention rates are good, as expected in a specialist college.

Quality of provision

Satisfactory: Grade 3

14. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, which agree with the college's own self-assessment. Learners enjoy lessons and are highly motivated. They understand what is expected of them and their behaviour in the classrooms is handled appropriately. There are a good variety and stimulating range of activities which engage learners fully. Teaching is enthusiastic and individual learning targets, based on assessment, are successfully taken into account in the planning of lessons. Lessons have clear objectives which build on previous learning.
15. Support provided to learners within lessons is, on many occasions, over directive; teachers and support staff assist too readily, and inhibit learning. Where this was observed, learners did not develop the skills needed to direct their own learning sufficiently. In a few cases lessons lacked pace, especially early on, with too much emphasis placed on the reinforcement of individual learning targets and not enough attention paid to their practical application.

- There is no clear strategy to embed literacy and numeracy within lessons and in many cases activities are overly contrived.
16. Information learning technology is used extensively during lessons, especially interactive white boards. However, these are not always effectively used to enhance learning. Although there are a good range of teaching materials and aids in classrooms, some are not appropriate for young adults. Effective communication strategies are used consistently across all learning environments. In a practical drama lesson, learners were using their individual communication aids and methods to express themselves effectively with the rest of the learners and staff.
 17. The college provides a satisfactory range of programmes to meet the individual needs and interests of learners. Programmes are focused and designed with a strong emphasis on developing learners' communication skills. Learners have good opportunities to learn a range of creative skills, including art and drama. Best use is made of the college's accommodation to provide relevant and meaningful learning environments to practice life and work skills. Many of them benefit from learning independence skills within their own residences and when doing horticulture within the extensive college grounds. A few learners gain useful internal work experience within the college shop and whilst shadowing staff in the performance of maintenance duties. The college recognises that external work experience opportunities for learners and links with other education and training providers and local employers are underdeveloped.
 18. A new curriculum structure introduced in September 2007 is being successfully implemented. This provides many of the learners with a more clearly defined progression path towards their long term goals, based on the achievement of life and work skills. All learners have individual learning plans which identify the courses they follow, the appropriate qualifications they take, and short term targets to achieve. These are clearly linked to their long and medium term goals. However, the college recognise that the development of short term targets is an area for improvement.
 19. The provision for the development of independence skills is satisfactory. As well as providing realistic learning environments for learners to practise these skills, it also offers opportunities for them to learn to use local facilities such as shops, leisure and social amenities. There is a good range of well established enrichment activities during evenings and weekends which include sporting activities and visits to pubs, cinemas and theatres. However, individual learning plans are not used effectively within residences to ensure a coherent programme for learners to follow across all areas of college provision. The provision for literacy and numeracy provision for a few learners, where appropriate, is underdeveloped.
 20. The college's strategy for the involvement of learners in developing their own learning is at an early stage. The learners are being encouraged to express their opinions and wishes in relation to the content of their learning programme and their leisure activities. One learner now successfully uses a chart to monitor and moderate her own behaviour. Learners play an effective part in making

- decisions about college life through the students' council and the governing body. Communication with parents and carers is satisfactory.
21. The college's response to social and educational inclusion is satisfactory. However, the formal promotion of equality and diversity issues within schemes of work and lesson plans is underdeveloped. Inclusion in the wider community is satisfactory.
 22. Support and guidance for learners are satisfactory. Specialist speech and language support is good. Learners have thorough assessments on which support plans are developed, regularly updated and communicated to all staff. Staff are very effective in implementing these plans to support learning. Learner groups are small with high levels of support. Personal support is effective and communication between residential and learning support assistants has improved. Tutors and key workers provide effective support through the regular meetings held between learners, tutors and key workers. Learners value the support provided and say that they have good access to staff at all times.
 23. The newly established inter-disciplinary team works proactively and provides good support for both staff and learners in occupational therapy, physiotherapy and behaviour. It is too early to evaluate the long term impact this increased support is having on learners' progress. Tutorials are satisfactory, although records do not always state clearly the progress learners make.
 24. Risk assessment is good. Individual risk assessments are comprehensive. Learner complaints procedures are satisfactory and learners are given guidance on how to complain and who to contact. Transition planning is satisfactory. The host Connexions service personal adviser attends most learners' reviews. The Connexions officer provides effective transition support for learners.

Leadership and management

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Contributory grade:
Equality of opportunity

Satisfactory: grade 3

25. Inspectors agree with the college's own self-assessment that leadership and management are satisfactory. The interim senior management team has a clear vision for the college clearly focused on improving the provision and learning outcomes for learners. They have been successful in establishing a culture firmly linked to the continuous improvement of provision with full staff involvement.
26. Quality assurance procedures have improved since the last inspection and are being successfully implemented. There are good operational arrangements for meetings to discuss progress in addressing areas for improvement, and key teaching and learning processes are carefully monitored. However, lesson observations have been mostly performed by external consultants. Although the college have very recently established a trained college observation team and procedure for lesson observations, this is in the early stages of development and is yet to be fully implemented.

27. Self-assessment is satisfactory and identifies strengths and areas for improvement clearly linked to quality improvement planning. Inspectors agree with most of the judgements contained within the report. However, a few of the strengths are overstated. Overall college key performance targets have been identified across all provision. These are not sufficiently integrated into quality improvement planning and objectives do not relate sufficiently to outcomes to measure success by.
28. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory. The college meets the requirements of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, Special Educational Needs and Disability 2002 Acts (SENDA), and Equality Act 2006. Adequate action plans are in place and impact assessments have started to be implemented focusing on the suitability of policies and procedures. Staff have received training in all aspects of equality and diversity. Although the college has analysed data in relation to achievement and recruitment, and identified areas for improvement, this is still underdeveloped, especially in relation to increasing participation of learners from minority ethnic backgrounds. The college has appropriate Protection of Vulnerable Adults (POVA) and safeguarding arrangements in place which are implemented effectively.
29. Effective partnerships are developing with other independent specialist colleges and links with community groups are clearly evident. However, although cited as a strength in the self-assessment report, there are limited formal arrangements with local education, training providers and employers.
30. The governing body and trustees have supported the college well through the period of instability and the charity has invested heavily in improving the provision to ensure the college's future development. There is now a satisfactory reporting process established which ensures governors are kept informed about the quality of provision. The college has identified key performance indicators in relation to learner outcomes but does not include these sufficiently well in quality improvement plans by which to measure success.
31. Staff value the comprehensive opportunities now given to them in relation to their training and development. Staff have adequate qualifications to perform their roles and show good skills and expertise, especially in relation to developing the communication skills of learners.
32. The oversight and monitoring to ensure individual learner schedules with the LSC are met, have improved, and overall financial management is effective. The college provides satisfactory value for money.