

Oakwood Court College

Focused monitoring visit report

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Last day of inspection: 7 December 2011

Type of provider: Independent specialist college

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INSPECTION MONITORING VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Context and focus of visit

Oakwood Court College is based in Dawlish, Devon. It is an independent specialist residential college providing further education to students aged 16 to 25, and is owned by Phoenix Learning and Care Ltd. The college currently provides for 39 students of whom 12 are female and all are White. The programmes are offered at three levels and aim to prepare students for independent living and supported or open employment.

At the last inspection in 2008 the college's overall effectiveness was found satisfactory, but leadership and management were inadequate as were equality and diversity. Additionally, the college was not meeting safeguarding requirements. At the re-inspection in 2009, leadership and management and equality and diversity were found satisfactory and safeguarding was judged to be good.

Themes

Self-assessment and improvement planning

What progress has Oakwood Court College made through its self-assessment and improvement planning to improve the provision, in particular the quality of teaching and learning? **Reasonable progress**

The college's self-assessment report was found insufficiently evaluative at the last inspection, and not all staff had contributed to it. The current report is more evaluative and staff are now more involved. The areas for improvement identified at the last inspection have been included in an action plan, and targets have been met. The college has identified improvements needed in teaching and learning. Staff have received training, including guidance on devising activities and approaches that help meet individual needs, focusing in particular on developing communication skills. However, not all staff are implementing this guidance effectively. The college recognises that it has over graded the quality of teaching and learning in its self-assessment report. The observation scheme does not focus sufficiently on identifying what all students have learnt or how teachers evaluate learning.

Outcomes for learners

What progress has Oakwood Court College made in improving and capturing outcomes for learners? **Reasonable progress**

At the last inspection visit outcomes for students were satisfactory, but the college had not put systems in place to measure distance travelled by students since starting at the college. All students achieve accredited qualifications. Around 75% of students achieve their long-term destination goals in relation to residential placements, some form of employment and continuing education or training. The college has a process in place to capture the progress made by students in improving their literacy and numeracy skills from the time they started at the college. The staff have completed

an exercise to contact leavers over the past three years to find out what has happened to them and have found that eight students who moved into voluntary or supported employment have continued in those placements. The college has explored ways to capture all aspects of students' progress whilst at the college, including underpinning skills such as social interaction and practical skills. It recognises that it now needs to establish a baseline from which to measure progress in key aspects of students' programmes, particularly those aspects that prepare students for their transition from the college.

Quality of provision

What progress has Oakwood Court College made in reviewing the curriculum to meet the changing needs of the student cohort?

Significant progress

At the last monitoring visit the college was about to review its curriculum, as the needs of the student cohort were changing. The college has made significant progress since then in changing the design and content of its programmes to meet the increasingly complex needs of students, and to focus the curriculum more effectively on preparing students to meet their destination goals. The students are involved in meaningful practical activities for most of the week, with significantly fewer classroom-based activities. The new curriculum is flexible and staff adapt it to meet the individual aspirations of students. The college has, for example, included vehicle maintenance and travel and tourism opportunities in response to students' requests. Work experience is meaningful and carefully matched to students' needs and interests. The schemes of work for subject areas, such as the expressive arts, focus on developing communication skills. The college has transformed its approach to information and communication technology (ICT) so that the course enhances students' practical abilities as well as their communication and independence skills.

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