



**Annual monitoring inspection report on
Beechwood College**

Date of inspection: May 2015

by

**Estyn, Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education
and Training in Wales**

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Publication date: 22/07/2015

Context

Beechwood College is an independent specialist college and care home, situated in Sully in the Vale of Glamorgan. It is owned by Beechwood Court Ltd, which is part of Ludlow Street Healthcare.

The college offers day and residential placements to learners aged 16 years of age and over who have an autistic spectrum disorder (ASD), learning disabilities or acquired brain injury. Many learners also demonstrate challenging behaviour. A few have physical difficulties.

The head of education leads a team of tutors and learning support assistants and has responsibility for the provision and delivery of all education programmes. The college's senior management team includes the director for education, the care home manager and the clinical lead.

There are currently 67 learners on the roll of the college, of whom 51 are young men and 16 are young women. Learners come to the college from a wide range of local authorities across England and Wales.

The current head of education took up post in December 2013. The college was last inspected in April 2014. In April 2015 the college opened a new vocational centre in the college grounds.

Main findings

Strengths

The college's strengths are that:

- The college has improved the on-site provision for vocational courses. For example, they have introduced wood working at the new vocational centre and increased the range of qualifications to include BTEC level 1 awards in music technology and art and design. In addition, they have increased the size of the horticulture area. Learners can choose to follow up to five vocational courses. Most learners engage enthusiastically in these courses.
- Learners behave well and respond positively to staff instructions.
- The college has effective arrangements for listening to learners. The learner council meets each term and has brought about changes that benefit the learners well. This includes improving the provision of information and communication technology (ICT), changing college menus and extending the range of extra-curricular activities.
- The staff team work together well to provide a caring and supportive environment. Staff have a good understanding of the needs, abilities and interests of learners.
- Senior leaders, including the clinical psychologist, monitor the use of physical

interventions and serious incidents well. They produce detailed positive behaviour management plans and comprehensive risk assessments. These outline safe methods of intervention and focus appropriately on the individual needs of learners.

Areas for development

The college's areas for development are that:

- A minority of learners do not attend well enough or are persistently late.
- Opportunities for lecturers to share good practice are underdeveloped.
- The college has implemented useful procedures to monitor the learners' small steps in learning in accredited courses. However, this approach is not fully embedded across the whole curriculum.

Recommendations

The college should:

- R1 Improve the attendance of a minority of learners who are persistently late or absent
- R2 Increase opportunities for lecturers to share good practice
- R3 Extend the procedures for measuring learners' progress to all areas of the curriculum

Progress in addressing recommendations from previous note of visit or inspection report

Recommendation 1: Improve learners' attendance

This recommendation has been partly addressed.

Leaders have implemented a useful tracking system to monitor learners' attendance and punctuality. They know which learners are persistently absent or late and have identified intervention strategies to support these learners to improve their levels of engagement. However, these strategies are newly in place and it is too early to evaluate their impact. The use of data to track learner attendance at individual lessons is underdeveloped.

Recommendation 2: Ensure that senior managers provide a clear direction for all staff that focuses on improving learners' outcomes

This recommendation has been fully addressed.

Leaders have prioritised improving learners' outcomes in the college development plan and meet staff regularly to communicate a clear vision for the development of this priority area. For example, learner outcomes are discussed in termly staff supervision meetings, are a clear focus of session observations and have been the main agenda item for staff training days.

Senior leaders provide detailed reports to the college's monthly education governance board on whole college and individual learner progress against targets for improving learner outcomes.

Recommendation 3: Use data effectively to track learners' progress and inform planning

This recommendation has been largely addressed.

Learners are assessed on entry to the college and at the end of each academic year. Lecturers produce individual learning plans that set appropriate targets for each learner. Where there is best practice, learners are involved fully in setting and monitoring specific and measurable targets.

Lecturers produce detailed session plans with a clear focus on the agreed targets for individual learners. Senior leaders and lecturers track learner progress in meeting these targets and produce progress reports that are discussed at staff meetings and the education governance board.

Recommendation 4: Establish a robust quality assurance cycle that has a clear focus on learners' outcomes

This recommendation has been largely addressed.

Senior leaders have strengthened the college's arrangements for self-evaluation to include a clear focus on improving learner outcomes. The self-evaluation report draws on a wide range of information including evidence from session observations and the scrutiny of learners' work. Leaders regularly evaluate lecturers' planning documents and provide them with constructive feedback and advice that links well to priorities in the college development plan.

The self-evaluation process takes good account of the views of staff, learners, parents and placement providers.

Leaders have started to analyse trends in learners' performance data.

Recommendation 5: Ensure that the curriculum meets the needs of all learners and provides them with the skills they need when they leave the college

This recommendation has been largely addressed.

Leaders have increased the range of courses that learners can choose from. The curriculum now reflects the needs, interests and abilities of learners' well. The college has improved arrangements for lecturers to plan for progression and learners have the opportunity to move from level 1 courses to level 2 as appropriate to their needs.

The occupational therapy team provides effective support for the development of learners' independent living skills. For example they produce useful sensory profiles for nearly all learners and schemes of work to support learners using public transport and preparing healthy meals.

Recommendation 6: Ensure that all staff provide appropriate challenge for the more able learners, so that they can meet their full potential

This recommendation has been largely addressed.

The college is now providing appropriately for a wider range of learner ability. Leaders have reviewed the curriculum and have introduced new courses that provide appropriate challenge for the more able learners.

Lecturers have high expectations of the work completed by the more able learners who are responding positively to this new level of challenge. For example, they understand the criteria required to achieve qualifications at different levels and are trying to achieve the highest outcomes possible.

Inspectors' judgements on this annual monitoring inspection should not prejudice the findings of a future full inspection.

College information

College	Beechwood College
College number	F0006003
Purpose of visit	Annual monitoring inspection
Date of visit	18/05/2015
Proprietor	Ludlow Street Healthcare
Staff	1 senior lecturer, 10 lecturers, 1 vocation centre manager, 1 woodwork tutor, 12 learning support assistants, 50 residential education workers.
Number of learners	67
Provision	Day and residential care
Type of special educational need (SEN) catered for by the college	Autistic spectrum disorders
Last full inspection	01/04/2014
Last annual monitoring inspection	24/01/2013
Last CSSIW inspection	23/06/2014

Team information

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