

Orchard Hill College

Independent specialist college

Inspection dates		20–22 November 2013
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Outstanding-1
	Previous inspection:	Good-2
Outcomes for learners		Outstanding-1
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Outstanding-1
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Outstanding-1

Summary of key findings for learners

This provider is outstanding because:

- The very successful acquisition of work skills enhances learners' progression to further training, volunteering and employment.
- Learners develop their self-confidence and skills, such as travel skills, information technology and daily living skills, extremely well which enable them to move on to independence and community destinations.
- Behaviour management and specialist therapeutic support are highly effective in enabling those learners from local communities, who have identified severe difficulties, to access learning, often for the first time.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are excellent. The extremely diverse programmes that meet learners' individual needs, interests and aspirations, prepare them very well for life after college.
- Staff are highly skilled at working with a very wide range of communication strategies to nurture the skills learners need to express themselves.
- Resources to support teaching, learning and assessment are of an exceptionally high standard. All centres provide well-equipped classrooms, specialist aids and adaptations, and the development and use of information technology and applications for learners' use are excellent.
- The vision of leaders and managers and its well-planned implementation, that has created learning centres in the communities where learners live, is outstanding.
- The very effective partnership arrangements with key organisations benefit learners enormously.
- Learners understand that their voice has value and that their opinions on the college have impact.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Improve the use of learning support within teaching and learning activities so that every learner benefits fully.
- Quicken the pace of making the electronic tracking system fully functional to allow timelier recording of learners' progress and achievements.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Outstanding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Outcomes for learners are outstanding. Learners successfully work towards goals for independence, supported living, making use of their local community facilities and services, work and further learning. The majority of learners make excellent progress in developing personal and social skills to improve their future lives. ▪ Learners are keen and enthusiastic and enjoy their learning. Attendance is very good. The college routinely gathers data, analysing it very thoroughly, to check for any gaps in the outcomes of different groups of learners to identify actions to redress any imbalance. However, data indicates there are no significant differences between groups. ▪ Employment outcomes have increased over the last two years, which is a significant achievement for learners with complex and significant learning and behavioural difficulties. More learners also graduate from the college to further education and training. ▪ Outcomes for learners gaining employability skills and progressing into work or into further education are outstanding. The college has made excellent progress in providing supported internships in a variety of jobs in local hospitals. One learner with high functioning Asperger's syndrome, an intern in the hospital reprographics department last year, has successfully progressed to higher education and is now living independently in the halls of residence. ▪ Learners are able to develop and practice their skills in a wide range of local work places including shops, cafés and community gardens, and gain skills in teamwork, following instructions, meeting and providing services for unfamiliar people, as well as specific job skills. One social enterprise group runs a lively community café where learners are adept at making drinks and snacks, taking orders, serving customers, clearing tables, washing up and operating the till. Other learners gain useful work related skills through internal college placements. ▪ The college works hard and successfully to secure opportunities and destinations for learners within their own local communities. ▪ Learners make excellent progress in the skills they need to manage their behaviour. Well-devised strategies assist learners very effectively to make progress towards tolerating crowds and strangers; they learn how to behave appropriately in different settings and learners improve their confidence requesting help and asking questions. ▪ The development of independence skills is excellent and a focus for preparing learners for their transition. Many learners progress to supported living, adult services and are well prepared to make use of local community facilities and services near their own homes. ▪ Learners gain essential practical skills that improve their independence. They learn to look after themselves, take responsibility for their belongings, use domestic equipment and make use of facilities and services in their local areas. One learner, whose aim is to live independently, has learned how to use equipment in the home and has gained the confidence to request help when she needs it. Learners thoroughly enjoy activities where they gain skills in safe and independent travel. 	

- For a minority of learners, targets set are too general and do not help them sufficiently to see how much progress they make. While learners make good progress in lessons, goals and targets set for functional skills in English and mathematics are sometimes not sufficiently specific to identify the applied skills that each individual learner needs.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Teaching, learning and assessment are outstanding and reflect the excellent achievements of learners. All staff have high expectations of learners, are ambitious for them and work hard to help them develop the skills to live as full, interesting and independent a life as possible in their own local communities with work, study, friends and a social life.
- Behaviour management and specialist therapeutic support are excellent. Learners benefit greatly from high levels of one-to-one, well-informed support from lecturers and therapists. Behaviour management is sensitive, flexible and extremely effective in helping learners to manage their own behaviour over time.
- Therapeutic support is plentiful and integrated seamlessly into learning, with training and coaching given to parents and carers to reinforce strategies at home. One learner was helped to feed himself by therapists working together to design specialist cutlery.
- Most learning support is sensitive and effective. However, a small minority of staff do not use signing, positive behaviour strategies, or seating arrangements that help learners focus and mirror their supporter, whilst others offer too much or too little support.
- Highly individualised programmes, designed by skilled lecturers, focus on work-related and independence skills and meet different learners' needs extremely effectively. Getting to know the local community and travelling safely around it are central to learners' programmes. Increasing numbers of learners undertake work placements and are supported to success by very effective job coaching. Physical activities, sports, games and visits enrich learners' time in college and prepare learners well for life afterwards.
- Accommodation and resources are excellent. Teachers and therapists increasingly use the latest information technologies confidently to help learners communicate their needs and wishes and to promote independence, for example in developing learners' skills in manipulating switches to activate household equipment. The use of tablet devices in classes and as an aid to navigate independently to community facilities and workplaces is widespread. The college has recently introduced eye-gaze technology to allow the most severely disabled learners to communicate with ease.
- The process for establishing learners' starting points is detailed and comprehensive and outcomes provide a clear basis from which to set targets. However, the recording and monitoring of learners' progress with a new, well-designed electronic system are not yet fully established.
- Verbal feedback from staff in learning sessions on learners' achievements is immediate, frequent and celebrates learners' success. Lecturers clearly describe to learners, in words and signs, what they have achieved and help them develop the habit of recognising progress themselves. Learners become interested not only in their own progress but also that of the rest of the group.
- The development of communication skills has a very high priority in the college. Staff use a very wide range of materials to increase learners' ability to convey meaning including speech, signing, symbolised schedules, photographs and objects of reference. Learners' numeracy skills, particularly their understanding of money, is continually reinforced in community activities and enterprise sessions involving real tasks with a purpose, although it is less effective outside these contexts. Lecturers strongly promote the development of learners' information technology (IT) skills. Recently, the innovative use of the college's social networking site, radio broadcasting service and use of Skype have provided a stimulating focus for IT work.
- Information, advice and guidance (IAG) are excellent. Pre-entry systems are extremely thorough. Staff visit learners at school or at home to assess their needs. Transition

arrangements are good and include a very useful booklet informing learners about all available local services. Learners receive very good guidance about employment opportunities, including supported and voluntary work.

- The promotion of equality and support for diversity are very good. The college provides excellent role models for learners by its staff and learner profile in terms of gender and ethnicity and teaching staff generally use learning resources to reflect the ethnic mix of the population. However, the promotion of learners' understanding of equality and diversity in lessons, particularly relating to rights and responsibilities at work for learners undertaking work placements, is insufficiently embedded in some lessons.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The Principal and managers have established a clear strategic direction and ambitious vision for the college, along with high expectations for all its learners. This outstanding vision is clearly shared by all staff and governors. The highly effective strategies and innovative responses to local needs are excellent, resulting in the expansion of four new learning centres, now firmly established within local communities. Managers have intelligently phased in the expansion of the centres to ensure the appropriateness to local needs and the quality of its resources.
- Governors are well informed, well qualified and have a range of experience that benefits the college. They provide appropriate challenge and support. They hold senior managers to account to strive for continuing development of the college's responses to local communities and for improving all aspects of learners' experience and achievements.
- Arrangements to monitor the performance of staff to improve teaching, learning and assessment are particularly thorough. Lecturers and therapeutic support staff are appropriately qualified and highly experienced in the areas in which they teach and support learners. Staff value the feedback and support provided through the good range of mentoring and support provided by the college.
- The college arranges an extensive range of training and professional development activities, which benefits all staff. Where staff wish to develop particular specialist knowledge, they are well supported and, in return, they are highly motivated to use and share these new skills.
- Self-assessment systematically includes the views of staff, learners, governors and partners. The process is particularly thorough, highly self-critical and clearly identifies the college's strengths and areas for improvement. The college's quality improvement plan links securely to the content of the self-assessment report and accurately identifies challenging actions to improve. Managers monitor the quality of all aspects of the college's provision extremely thoroughly to identify and sustain continuing improvements. A comprehensive analysis of the results of regular audits of all aspects of the learner journey assists managers in identifying key areas for improvements, which inspectors also identified.
- Managers value the views of its learners highly. The college actively encourages their input about how well the provision meets their needs across all areas of their programme, through a particularly effective range of activities. For example, the active student council and the five student governors take turns to represent the views of their peers during governor meetings.
- The college's work with partners to improve and extend the curriculum is outstanding. Developments are particularly well thought through and planned and are at the heart of innovative developments, such as establishing the local community learning centres through links with local authorities. Collaborations with local hospital trusts and other partners provide real work-based learning experiences and opportunities for learners. Learners gain valuable work-based skills to assist with their transition through a good variety of external employment opportunities. Links with employers are developing well and used very effectively to secure work placements.
- All five learning centres are welcoming places for learners. An excellent range of resources assists their learning. The development of e-learning resources is outstanding and enables

learners to develop appropriate means of communication very well, according to their individual need. These include the wide use of tablet devices, with a range of adapted applications, and the good use made of interactive smart boards in classrooms. The college continually strives to develop additional and useful interactive applications such as the learners' e-magazine. The college is currently developing the use of an e-monitoring programme that will enable more cohesion between e-individual learning programmes (ILPs) and e-portfolios.

- The college's widening participation strategy enables young people and adults to have easy access to training where otherwise they would not. The college continues to demonstrate its highly developed culture of respect and inclusion that exists between staff and learners. Data are thoroughly analysed and used well to identify and set actions where there are differences in enrolment and performance of different groups of learners. The college does not tolerate bullying and harassment, and where there are incidents, rapid action is taken.
- As well as ensuring that the college meets statutory requirements for safeguarding its learners, the college systematically carries out risk assessments of individual learners and learning activities, trips out of the college and work placement situations. Staff, governors and volunteers attend the regular and planned mandatory training in safeguarding.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

Orchard Hill College

Inspection grades are based on a provider's performance: 1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Requires improvement 4: Inadequate	Overall	16-19 study programmes	19+ Learning programmes
Overall effectiveness	1	1	1
Outcomes for learners	1	1	1
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	1	1	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management	1	1	1

Provider details

Type of provider	Independent specialist college							
Age range of learners	16+							
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	Full-time: 119							
	Part-time: 220							
Principal/CEO	Dr Caroline Allen							
Date of previous inspection	July 2008							
Website address	www.orchardhill.ac.uk							
Provider information at the time of the inspection								
Main course or learning programme level	Level 1 or below		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4 and above	
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
Full-time	12	163	-	-	-	-	-	-
Part-time	3	167	-	-	-	-	-	-
Number of traineeships	16-19		19+		Total			
	-		-		-			
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Number of learners aged 14-16	-							
Funding received from	Education Funding Agency and Skills Funding Agency							
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ N/A 							

Contextual information

Orchard Hill College is a non-residential independent specialist college. Since the last inspection, the college has expanded its provision and now manages five learning centres, situated in local communities in Surrey and London boroughs. The college provides both full- and part-time individualised programmes for young people and adults with profound/severe/moderate and complex learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Learners have additional support needs in relation to autistic spectrum disorder, emotional or behavioural challenges, physical disabilities, sensory impairment as well as medical needs, mental health issues and those learners with English as an additional language.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector

Diane Stacey HMI

One of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and two additional inspectors, assisted by the Vice Principal as nominee, carried out the inspection with short notice. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors also used data on learners' achievements over the last three years to help them make judgements. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of learners and employers; these views are reflected throughout the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all of the provision at the provider. Inspectors looked at the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across all of the provision.

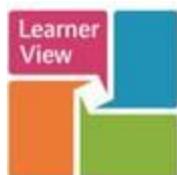
What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Handbook for the inspection of further education and skills 2012*, Part 2:

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/handbook-for-inspection-of-further-education-and-skills-september-2012>

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