

# Condover College Limited

## Independent specialist college

<b>Inspection dates</b>		<b>19–21 March 2014</b>
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>This inspection:</b>	<b>Good-2</b>
	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement-3
Outcomes for learners		Good-2
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Good-2
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Good-2

### Summary of key findings for learners

#### This provider is good because:

- Learners make good progress, particularly in developing their communication and social skills. They become more confident at making choices and interacting with others.
- Teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection and most lessons are good.
- Teachers, therapists and support staff work well together to help students to access learning, and personal support for learners is good.
- Staff use communication aids very effectively to promote learning.
- The college makes good use of community settings to deliver the curriculum, so that learning takes place in realistic situations.
- Improvements in leadership and management have led to a culture of high expectations for learners.
- Changes within the organisation Board that oversees the college mean that Board members now monitor the standard of education and hold managers to account more effectively.

#### This is not yet an outstanding provider because:

- Although the daily progress of learners is monitored well, their overall progress over time is not always captured sufficiently clearly in review documents.
- Pockets of teaching still exist that are less than good and there are not enough outstanding lessons.
- Learners' understanding of diversity in society is not well developed.

## Full report

### What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- The college should review its procedures for capturing learners' progress and carry out further staff training on this aspect to ensure greater consistency in recording clearly learners' progress over time.
- Managers should ensure the continued development of staff skills so that all teaching and learning is at least good. They should also share examples of outstanding practice more effectively across the college.
- Further external links and staff training are needed to help learners gain a wider experience and better understanding of different cultures. This should be monitored more closely in the observations of teaching and learning.

### Inspection judgements

<b>Outcomes for learners</b>	Good
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- Learners make good progress in relation to their starting points, and a significant number of learners achieve qualifications in life and living skills that link well to their medium and longer-term goals.
- College data indicate no significant variations in achievement of qualifications or wider learning goals between different groups of learners and inspection evidence confirms this is generally the case. The progress of a few more able learners is impeded on occasion in lessons as they wait too long for the next stage of work once they have achieved their initial goal.
- Learners make particularly good progress in improving their communication skills and are able to communicate effectively with each other using Makaton signing, pictures and symbols. Learners greet each other at the beginning of the day and are able to express their views about which other learners they would like to work with in an activity.
- Learners make significant gains in developing their personal and independence skills. They acquire good everyday life skills such as choosing what snack they want to prepare. As they progress through the college learners gain increased independence and ability to interact with others. For some, this is a result of learning to express preferences through better eye contact or learning to press a switch. Others become able to take turns and use equipment, for example to make toast, cereals, sandwiches and drinks.
- Where possible, learners develop the skills that enable them to advocate for themselves. For example, in a progress review session one learner used photographs that he put into colour coded trays to show which taster sessions he wished to participate in as part of the transition plan for when he leaves college.
- Learners develop appropriate English and mathematical skills such as counting, shape and colour recognition. They are encouraged to develop and use their speaking skills through drama and music activities. Learners demonstrated improved verbal skills, comprehension of a sequence of events and understanding of time concepts such as 'now' and 'next' while they rehearsed for a play.
- Travel training has further developed learners' skills enabling them to access wider community activities. Learners are able to travel on public buses and trains with support, demonstrating their communication and social skills in unfamiliar settings. Learners of higher ability are able to recognise coins and understand the concept of money exchange when paying for travel.

Learners who were initially anxious are now for the first time confident to travel in vehicles other than the college bus.

- Learners develop and reinforce their learning through an increasing number of work experience opportunities. In a horticulture setting, learners were able to identify and remove weeds, gaining work-related language and appropriate work behaviours. For learners not yet ready to access external placements, internal work experience provides a realistic work setting and supports the development of transferable skills. For example, learners prepare snacks for the learner café where they gain an understanding of how café processes work. College learners can visit the café and benefit from practising their social skills while sampling the café products.
- Learners progress mainly into the organisation's residential accommodation at the end of their college course. The skills that learners develop at college prepare them well for life in the residences such as having greater control over their personal care where possible, carrying out simple domestic tasks and socialising with other residents. Links exist with local further education colleges for the small number of learners who can benefit from this progression route. Arrangements to support the continuation of work placements after learners have left college are under-developed.

### The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment have improved since the last inspection and are now good. Students enjoy their learning and make good progress. Staff have high expectations of what learners can achieve and most plan interesting and challenging learning activities for them to ensure they reach their potential towards independence.
- Teachers, therapists and support staff collaborate successfully providing learners with highly individualised programmes which stretch their capabilities. Students learn to make choices and to influence their own learning. For example, they decide on the order in which to perform an activity or choose the method of carrying out a task.
- Students are active in their learning and take part in a good variety of interesting, practical and creative activities. Learners with major physical disabilities are hoisted out of their wheelchairs to enable them to access different types of equipment, musical instruments, materials and information technologies. Teachers make good use of different learning aids, such as objects of reference, to develop learners' communication skills. They give learners the freedom to explore, touch, see and smell in order to improve their ability to make their preferences known.
- Learners benefit from the variety of communication aids provided to enhance their learning. They use different types of assistive technology to good effect, according to their individual needs and capabilities. The introduction of technical devices such as 'tablets' has increased learners' ability to make choices and has been highly effective in improving their independence. The well-equipped sensory room, large screened computer monitors and up-to-date software have greatly improved the learning experience by helping learners with the most complex needs to be actively involved in their learning.
- Initial assessment is comprehensive and includes a detailed evaluation by the speech and language therapist of learners' communication skills. Learners' long term goals and shorter term learning targets are effectively identified and successfully used by teachers to plan lessons. Specialist support is accurately allocated according to each learner's individual needs.
- Learners' progress against short term targets is regularly monitored and recorded. However, progress towards their long term goals is not always sufficiently collated to show their overall progress from their starting points. In a few cases learning targets are not revised quickly enough when achieved.
- In most cases support in lessons is effectively managed, but on occasions in a few lessons support staff are not adequately informed about their role prior to, or during, a learning activity.

In these cases more able learners may wait too long to move on to the next task. Although support staff in most cases demonstrate expertise in dealing with students of very limited communication skills, in a few instances they rely too heavily on the teacher to show them how to interact with the learners effectively. This slows the pace of learning.

- Where appropriate and meaningful, literacy and numeracy tasks are included in learning activities. Teachers ensure tasks are relevant and are carried out at the same time as improving learners' communication skills. In one session learners were asked to focus on the colour and size of the ball they were using in a games session. In another, learners counted the number of skittles in a game of bowling. While developing their ability to choose, staff frequently ask learners to look at and count three or more pictures representing different learning activities. For the more able learners, literacy skills are improved in realistic situations, such as writing short accounts of their activities and emailing them home.
- Learners benefit from increasing opportunities to learn while accessing community facilities. They enjoy taking part in activities such as ice skating and ten pin bowling in a local leisure centre, and teachers use this effectively to increase learners' confidence when mixing with unfamiliar people, sights and sounds. Learners practise domestic skills in their residences and learn to be more independent. Learning targets are shared across the college and residences so that learning and the development of communication skills are reinforced across the provision.
- Teachers and support staff constantly reinforce students' learning by giving them immediate feedback and praise as they achieve and make progress. Learners' confidence, self-esteem and participation improve as a result of teachers' and support staff's encouragement and enthusiasm. Where appropriate students are fully involved in their learning and know what they need to do to improve further.
- Transition arrangements include a good range of activities and visits to help learners and families consider future options. Parents and carers are involved well in transition meetings; one parent who lives a considerable distance from the college spoke of the college's flexibility in the timing of meetings.
- The promotion of equality and diversity through teaching and learning is satisfactory. Teachers plan lessons to meet the needs of individual learners well according to their levels of ability. Resources are well adapted to support learning. The college involves the learners in college decision making and ensures that their contribution, however small, is recognised. Learners are respected and listened to. However, teachers do not plan sufficient activities to broaden learners' awareness of the range of cultures and backgrounds of different groups in the wider community.

## The effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leadership and management of the college have improved significantly since the last inspection and are now good. At the time of the last inspection the college had experienced several personnel changes in the key role of Head of Education. The current postholder has been in place since September 2012 and has been instrumental in driving up the standard of education experienced by learners.
- Further successful actions to strengthen leadership and management since the previous inspection include the appointment of a quality manager and the successful building up of the capacity of staff across the organisation. Staff now have clear roles and responsibilities. They are very supportive of the changes that have taken place and demonstrate a high level of commitment to bringing about improvement. Staff speak about greater accountability along with increased support to help them carry out their roles.

- The college now has effective links with a range of external partners, including other specialist colleges. This has been instrumental in helping managers and staff to identify best practice in the sector and to use this to inform developments at the college.
- The Board has strengthened its ability to monitor the effectiveness of the college. New members have been appointed to the Education Committee to ensure there is appropriate expertise. Members have received useful training on the role of the board, and the monitoring of teaching and learning. Members now carry out 'learning walks' in the college to ensure they are better informed about the learners' experience.
- The Education Committee meets regularly and its role is crucial in ensuring the main Board of the organisation is better informed about the work of the college. The Committee is beginning to provide more effective challenge to senior managers. For example, a recent paper on learners' achievement of targets was returned to managers with a request for greater clarification and details. The Board is in the process of developing criteria to monitor its own effectiveness.
- Managers now monitor the quality of teaching and learning effectively. They carry out regular observations of learning sessions. Where these are judged to be less than good, staff receive extra support to improve and are then reobserved. The organisation has introduced an element of performance related pay, with the quality of teaching and learning as one of the key criteria. Capability procedures now allow for action to be taken more quickly where performance does not improve.
- Self-assessment processes are now more rigorous and enable the college to have a good understanding of its key strengths and areas for improvement. The views of stakeholders are taken into account, for example via questionnaires to gain the views of parents and carers. College records, and parents spoken to during the inspection, indicate a high level of satisfaction from the majority of parents and carers.
- A major review of the curriculum since the last inspection has led to improvements that benefit the learning experience. In particular, increased use of community-based settings means that learning takes place in realistic, everyday situations. Where appropriate, learners take part in supported work placements. The college recognises the need to extend this work further and to ensure learners are able to continue placements at the end of their college programme where appropriate.
- Resources to support learning have improved significantly. Improvements to accommodation and facilities include the creation of a training kitchen and high standard sensory resources. The use of modern technology to support learning is now good.
- The college monitors regularly the effectiveness of its equal opportunities policies. Managers analyse data to identify if any group of learners achieve less well than others. The college is characterised by a culture of respect for the individual. However, managers recognise that less attention has been paid to the promotion of learners' understanding of diversity in society and that this is an area for improvement.
- The college meets its statutory responsibilities with regard to safeguarding. Appropriate training is in place for managers with key responsibility for safeguarding and all staff receive regular updates. Further training is planned to improve the clarity of recording on incident forms. Good links exist with relevant external agencies, such as health services and the local safeguarding board.

## Record of Main Findings (RMF)

### Condover College Limited

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

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
<b>Independent living and leisure skills</b>	<b>2</b>

## Provider details

<b>Type of provider</b>	Independent specialist college							
<b>Age range of learners</b>	19+							
<b>Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year</b>	Full-time: 26							
	Part-time: 1							
<b>CEO/Head of Education</b>	Stephen McGill / Tracy Gillett							
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	October 2012							
<b>Website address</b>	Website currently in development							
<b>Provider information at the time of the inspection</b>								
<b>Main course or learning programme level</b>	<b>Level 1 or below</b>		<b>Level 2</b>		<b>Level 3</b>		<b>Level 4 and above</b>	
<b>Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)</b>	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
<b>Full-time</b>	N/A	30	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Part-time</b>	N/A	1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Number of traineeships</b>	16-19		19+		Total			
	N/A		N/A		N/A			
<b>Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age</b>	<b>Intermediate</b>		<b>Advanced</b>		<b>Higher</b>			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		
<b>Number of learners aged 14-16</b>	N/A							
<b>Full-time</b>	N/A							
<b>Part-time</b>	N/A							
<b>Number of community learners</b>	N/A							
<b>Number of employability learners</b>	N/A							
<b>Funding received from</b>	Education Funding Agency (EFA)							
<b>At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ N/A.</li> </ul>							

## Contextual information

Condover College Limited (CCL) is registered as an industrial and provident society and has charitable status. It is a small independent specialist college in Shropshire providing for learners with profound and multiple learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Learners take an entry level programme designed to develop their communication, independence, functional, vocational and personal skills. Eight learners attend on a day basis and 23 are residential. The college's residential accommodation is located in community homes in the local area. In addition to the 26 learners funded by the Education Funding Agency (EFA), three learners are funded by social services and two by the Welsh Assembly.

## Information about this inspection

**Lead inspector**

Sue Harrison HMI

One of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and two additional inspectors, assisted by the head of education 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 telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of parents and carers; these views are reflected throughout the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all relevant 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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