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Mrs Tracy Gillett
Head of Education
Condover College Limited
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Dear Mrs Gillett

Short inspection of Condover College Limited

Following the short inspection on 22 November 2017, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The inspection was the first short inspection carried out since the provider was judged to be good in March 2014.

This provider continues to be good.

You, your leadership team and the board members have worked tirelessly to make sure that students benefit from high-quality education, support and personal care, despite many changes at the college since the previous inspection. These include an increase in the number of healthcare-funded students, a reduction in the number of Education and Skills Funding Agency-funded students (day and residential), and an increase in the number of students presenting very challenging behaviours, the most profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD) and complex needs. You and your team have a consistent and determined focus on continuous improvement, ensuring that students are prepared well for adulthood in a learning environment where they can thrive.

You have invested significantly in the appointment of additional staff and the development and training of staff, which has resulted in:

- the appointment of four new therapy staff, including an occupational therapist
- the introduction of the non-abusive psychological and physical intervention (NAPPI) team, which provides staff with advice and support on keeping students calm and productive by preventing incidents
- the promotion of three learning support assistants (LSAs) to fully qualified and experienced tutors in PMLD and complex needs.

Students receive an individualised education and support programme, which is

developed by staff in conjunction with parents, carers, social workers and teachers from the school from which students are making the transition. As a result, the programmes meet students' diverse range of education and support needs well.

You and your managers have successfully addressed almost all the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection:

- You and your staff use challenging and reliable targets to help to measure the progress that students make over time. Staff carry out frequent reviews with students and capture the small steps of progress well, which are recorded clearly and in detail.
- You have improved further the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by providing staff with good-quality training to enable them to meet the increasing needs of the changing cohort of students. Staff training in autism and behaviour management, and communication strategies, has resulted in a significant reduction in the number of incidents relating to the poor behaviour of students in lessons. Students learn in a calm and productive environment. However, you have identified correctly that more training and coaching are required to support a minority of teachers to provide a consistently challenging learning experience for all students so that the most able reach their potential.
- You and your staff have developed a new personal, social, health and emotional (PSHE) programme. Through this programme, students are provided with many opportunities to explore different cultures from around the world and, as a result, their understanding of the diversity in society is enhanced.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders, managers, staff and board members place a high priority on making sure that students and staff are safe. Students are safe in learning settings. They adopt safe working practices and are supported appropriately by the large team of LSAs. Safeguarding is a compulsory agenda item at the weekly whole-staff meeting. Staff discuss any changes in students' behaviour and agree on the prevention strategies to be adopted for each student. The safeguarding committee carefully tracks and monitors safeguarding incidents, accidents and near-misses at the bimonthly meeting. The committee uses this information well to inform decision-making and staff training.

Leaders and managers have strong relationships with external agencies, including the local authority. The agencies provide managers with useful advice and guidance on potential student referrals, and helpful feedback regarding the quality of safeguarding investigations and reports. They work well with managers to provide staff with comprehensive training in safeguarding, the 'Prevent' duty, British values, health and safety, autism and student behaviour management.

Leaders and managers have revised college policies in response to the latest guidance and are meeting the requirement regarding the 'Prevent' duty, the Mental Capacity Act and the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) reforms. They receive positive and helpful feedback on the effectiveness their

policies and procedures from external agencies. College safeguarding procedures meet the statutory requirements.

Inspection findings

- All students are making good or better progress from their starting points and towards achieving their goals and aspirations. Staff use well the new approach to assessing students' starting points – which identifies students' independence, behavioural, communication and academic needs – to inform short- and long-term targets for each student.
- Students develop their communication and independent living skills well. Their self-confidence, self-esteem and ability to work with others increase over time, preparing them well for their next steps. As a result of developing their personal and social skills, around half the students participate in community activities and external work experience such as helping at a befriending service in a care home, a food bank, a nursing home and a library.
- Staff use the PSHE curriculum creatively and sensitively to promote British values, and the 'Prevent' duty to students in a way that is relevant. For example, students learn the importance of their rights and being able to say 'no', identifying when they are happy and unhappy, and developing the acceptable behaviours for college, the community and the workplace. Students play an active part on the student council. Students have developed a better understanding of aspects of British values and citizenship and democracy, and their suggestions to staff have resulted in improvements at the college – for example, a recently introduced mobile library, more choices on the lunchtime menu, and the decision to keep a quiet room for students to use for relaxation and quiet thinking time.
- During student council meetings, students discuss and choose the countries that they want to explore, such as China, Brazil and Greece. Staff use a wide range of sensory learning activities, such as tasting new foods and experiencing new flavours, listening to music and participating in art workshops to increase students' understanding of different cultures from around the world. For example, staff invited community members with a Chinese heritage into the college to work with staff and students in a meaningful way to prepare, cook and eat traditional Chinese meals, and to learn about the differences in cultural practices through the medium of drama and by producing traditional Chinese art.
- Staff work well with parents, carers, other professionals and students during frequent 'trio-tutorial' sessions to review the appropriateness of the originally agreed long-term targets and to make adjustments, so that students achieve their aspirations and goals. Managers have worked hard to collect and identify the continued progress that students make, six months after they have left the college. The feedback provided to staff by parents, carers and other professionals suggests that – since the previous inspection – most students achieved their aspirations and goals on entry to the college, and have maintained and/or developed further their skills after leaving the college.

- Managers plan well for students' transition from school into college. Students, and their parents and carers, receive effective advice and guidance from staff and an independent advocacy service to help them to identify a range of opportunities available when leaving the college and to plan the next step. However, they do not always have sufficient access to a wider range of independent advice and guidance services to better inform the planning.
- The quality improvement plan (QIP) is clear, well constructed, honest and detailed. Managers use the QIP well to monitor the progress made over time as a result of the actions taken. However, managers do not identify explicitly the impact on students of the actions taken, and on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment – and targets are not always measurable. This makes evaluating impact over time more difficult.

Next steps for the provider

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- managers clearly identify in the QIP the impact on students of the successful achievement of an area for improvement and, where possible, quantify the targets and use these indicators to monitor the progress made and to measure the impact on students over time
- students, and their parents and carers, receive impartial advice and guidance from a wider range of external agencies to help inform their decision-making about future opportunities and destinations, and to help them to achieve their longer-term aspirations after leaving the college
- a minority of teachers continue to improve the consistency and quality of teaching, learning and assessment by providing them with additional training and coaching on improving their planning and communication when deploying LSAs, so that all students are engaged fully and challenged sufficiently throughout learning sessions and thereby achieve their potential and individual targets.

I am copying this letter to the Education and Skills Funding Agency. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Denise Olander
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, inspectors were assisted by the head of education, as nominee. We met with managers, board members including the chief executive officer of Condover College Limited, learning support workers, teachers and students. With members of your staff, we reviewed students' work and progress tracking systems, and observed teaching, learning and assessment. We reviewed key documents, including those relating to strategic planning; self-assessment; teaching, learning and assessment performance and destination data; and safeguarding.