

The Mount Camphill Community

Focused monitoring visit report

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Type of provider: Independent specialist college

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FOCUSED MONITORING VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Context and focus of visit

The Mount Camphill Community (the community), located in Wadhurst, East Sussex, is an independent specialist college (ISC). In 2008/09 the community provided 36 residential places and two day places for young people aged between 16 to 23 years with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, funded by the Learning and Skills Council.

The community's training and education programme extends over three years. Students follow courses in one or two of the following areas: baking, ceramics, cooking, weaving, woodwork, gardening, and estate and rural skills. All workshop programmes are accredited through Open College Network (OCN) local units. At the previous inspection in 2008 all aspects of the provision were judged to be good.

Themes

Outcomes for students

How much progress has the college made in improving outcomes for students? Reasonable progress

The community has made reasonable progress in ensuring that students have their vocational achievements accredited. An increasing number of students achieve units of qualifications. More students are involved in employment-related activity when they leave. It is clear from discussions with students, and in the documentation, that students make good progress in developing skills of independence in their residences, and gain in self-confidence through their engagement in craft activities. The community has yet to develop systems to ensure that the distance travelled by students across all of their learning is effectively captured.

Quality of provision

How much progress has been made in implementing transition plans for students? Reasonable progress

At the last monitoring visit the community had made insufficient progress in preparing the students for their destinations. Since then the community has revised its systems of student review and transition. The process now starts from the first year, with the involvement of students, parents/carers, social services and Connexions staff. The procedures this year include a pilot scheme of contact with relevant agencies in the students' home locations. Work experience opportunities are more closely matched to students' possible destinations. In 2008/09 an increased number of students found employment with employers where they previously had work experience.

Leadership and management

How much progress has been made in using self assessment and quality improvement to improve the leadership and management arrangements? Reasonable progress

Since the last inspection the community has been through a period of significant turbulence in relation to its management arrangements. The self-assessment review (SAR) for 2008/09, reflects this well and identifies significant areas of concern, including safeguarding, and grades them appropriately. The SAR identified that the management arrangements had not allowed for sufficient rigour in the monitoring of the provision and did not adequately prepare the community to respond to external requirements. The newly appointed general manager has started to bring about improvements, and the community is making reasonable progress in completing the improvement plan and rectifying areas of concern. A revised management structure has been agreed, and staff teams have now very clear responsibilities for specific aspects of development and change. The community's staff support these changes, which represent a significant cultural shift from the previous arrangements. Training for staff in key areas, such as behaviour management, has taken place. Staff are making reasonable progress in preparing for external changes and have increased involvement in local networks and the local authority.

Safeguarding

What progress has been made in meeting safeguarding requirements? Reasonable progress

Since the last inspection the community has had a Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspection, which identified significant weaknesses in the safeguarding arrangements. The community has made reasonable progress in meeting the safeguarding requirements. This progress has been accelerated following the general manager's appointment. All staff have had Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks. The documentation in relation to CRB requirements, in particular that relating to volunteers from overseas, has been thoroughly checked with photocopies of relevant documentation now kept on file. The central register now includes the volunteers. The safeguarding policies have been revised and all members of staff have been trained. The manager has a level 4 qualification and three members of staff have a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) at level 3. Staff have been trained in behaviour management, including issues relating to restraint. The arrangements for recording incidents have improved and staff complete these effectively, with a greater understanding of the need for such reports. The manager has been working with the local safeguarding board and the CQC to complete an action plan to rectify weaknesses. Much of this has now been completed. Plans are in place for more staff to be updated in aspects of health and safety.

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