

Creating Tomorrow College

Monitoring visit report

Unique reference number:	149250
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Inspection dates:	24 and 25 January 2024
Type of provider:	Independent specialist college
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Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

Ofsted undertakes to carry out monitoring visits to independent specialist colleges newly funded by the Education and Skills Funding Agency. This monitoring visit was undertaken as part of those arrangements and as outlined in the 'Further education and skills inspection handbook', especially the sections entitled 'Monitoring visits' and 'Monitoring visits to providers that are newly directly publicly funded'. The focus of these visits is on the themes set out below.

Creating Tomorrow College (CTC) is an independent specialist college based in Northamptonshire. It is part of a multi-academy trust specialising in the education of children and young people with special educational needs. The college works with 18- to 25-year-olds living in and around Northamptonshire. All learners have cognition and learning needs and/or autism and are supported by education, health and care (EHC) plans. At the time of the monitoring visit, 19 learners were based at the college's main site in Wellingborough and eight at its centre in Daventry. All learners study English, mathematics, digital skills and employability skills at a level appropriate to their needs.

The college does not work with any subcontractors.

Themes

How much progress have leaders and managers made in designing and delivering relevant learning programmes that are clearly defined and tailored to suit the individual needs of learners? Reasonable progress

Leaders have skilfully developed an employment-focused pathway that meets the needs of learners, local employers and the requirements of the local authorities with whom they work. They ensure that courses focus clearly on the development of employability skills to help prepare learners for long-term sustained employment in jobs to which they aspire.

Leaders have formed productive relationships with local employer partners. These provide opportunities for learners to benefit from high-quality, meaningful work experience. Learners can also practise their social and communication skills. Leaders ensure that work placements contribute to meeting learners' education, health and care needs and that their outcomes are suitably planned. They are not afraid to challenge local authorities where care plans do not address the learner's aspirations or career goals.

Leaders know CTC's strengths and weaknesses well. They take swift actions to identify and improve any weaknesses in the quality of training that learners receive. They have a sound understanding of local employment trends and patterns. Leaders use this understanding to help learners explore their interests and aspirations in sectors such as logistics, hospitality, catering and education.

Leaders monitor learners' progress carefully. They intervene swiftly to ensure that any learners falling behind in their studies receive support to help them keep up with their peers.

Leaders provide high-quality staff development to improve the overall quality of learners' experience. They help newly appointed job coaches to develop specialist skills to support learners into work placements. They use high-needs funding to recruit staff who understand the challenges that learners face when looking for work. Learners benefit from good teaching and high-quality work placements.

Senior leaders at the Creating Tomorrow Trust recently made three appointments to a newly constituted board of directors. CTC leaders co-opted an additional four directors. However, it is too soon to judge the impact of this newly constituted board.

How much progress have leaders and managers made to ensure that learners benefit from high-quality learning programmes that develop independence, communication and skills and help them to achieve their personal and/or work-related goals? Reasonable progress

Teachers have developed a well-structured and sequenced curriculum that provides good opportunities for learners to participate in learning. The curriculum supports employment outcomes and promotes learners' independence and personal development. Staff work well with learners to ensure that planned EHC plan outcomes are up to date, suitably personalised and achievable.

Staff ensure that learners improve their English, mathematics, and digital skills in addition to their personal and social skills. They support learners to develop employability skills such as punctuality, professionalism, and communication skills. As a result, learners thrive in their work placements and make valuable contributions to their employers.

Staff assess learners' starting points carefully. They use the available information on each learner's specific needs, including behaviour and sensory needs, to provide courses that are closely aligned to individual learner's EHC plans. Learners study at the level most suited to their abilities and that aligns well with their goals and aspirations.

Learners benefit from learning opportunities that help to prepare them for the world of work. They have appropriate targets to help them to achieve qualifications in English and mathematics, as well as targets to enhance their independent living skills. Learners quickly pass their functional skills qualifications and acquire personal skills and knowledge that prepare them well for work and independent living.

Leaders support continual professional development for all staff. They provide high-quality training for teachers and for job coaches that helps to improve their professional practice. Leaders have also supported teachers to achieve qualified teacher status.

Leaders have implemented appropriate procedures for capturing the range of personal and social skills and behaviours that learners develop during their work experience or employment. However, not all staff record learners' development of these valuable skills well. As a result, a few learners do not have a record of progress and achievement that celebrates their success.

How much progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that effective safeguarding arrangements are in place? Reasonable progress

Learners feel safe. They benefit from leaders' commitment to a strong safeguarding culture. Teachers help learners to identify risks and to take sensible actions to stay safe on campus, at work and when online. Learners are aware of local threats such as crimes related to race and to the use of knives.

The designated safeguarding lead has suitable qualifications and experience. They log safeguarding incidents carefully and take prompt actions to deal with any referrals. Leaders make good use of their links with the local authority's safeguarding team and with the police for advice and support when required.

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