

Susan Willan  
 Denise Wade  
 Regional team inspector:  
 Joan Lockett, Welsh Assembly Government  
 Julie Lynes-Grainger, Learning and Skills Council  
 Beechwood College  
 Peter Jones, f.a.o. Jane Cooper, Ofsted  
 College Registry Clerk

College Number:  
 673/7904

**NOTE OF VISIT: ANNUAL MONITORING OF REGISTERED  
 INDEPENDENT SPECIAL COLLEGES**

College	Beechwood College Hayes Road Sully Penarth Vale of Glamorgan CF64 5SE 02920532210
Purpose of visit	Annual monitoring inspection
Date of visit	December 2 <sup>nd</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> 2008
HMI/AI	Claire Yardley HMI Alison Wilkinson AI
Principal	Helen Dando
Proprietor	Ludlow Street Healthcare Group Ltd., 5 <sup>th</sup> Floor Harlech Court, Bute Terrace, Cardiff CF10 2FE
Staff	There are currently 120 members of staff in total, 16 are teaching and education staff and 104 care (residential education) and therapy staff.  The college's senior management team consists of the Principal, one vice principal and a head of education.
Pupils/Students	There are currently 28 residential and 6 day learners, aged 16 – 35, on roll; 24 are male and 10 are female.  Learners have a wide range of needs as a result of autistic spectrum disorder or acquired brain injury, many have severe communication difficulties.

Provision	Day and 52 Week residential
Fee per pupil (education and care element)	£36000 - £150000 for 52 weeks
Placing/Funding authorities	DCELLS funds learners for educational placements at the college. No learners are funded by the LSC. LA social services (education for some 16 to 19 year olds and / or LHB (Wales) / PCT (England) health funding.
Last HMI inspection	24th May 2007
Last CSSIW visit	September 2008

## **Main findings**

### **1. Strengths**

The strengths of the college are:

- the very strong leadership from the senior management team;
- the increasing use of communication systems help to fully engage learners;
- learners' access to a wide range of support from a large clinical team; and
- the excellent curriculum documentation and planning.

### **2. Emerging issues**

The new classroom provision in Woodlands is not as well resourced as in other areas of the college and learners do not always access the sessions that are on offer.

### **3. Recommendations**

The college is recommended to:

- improve the provision, the support and take up of education by learners in Woodlands;
- continue to extend the use of non verbal communication strategies across all sections of the college; and
- make sure that learners can use the re-cycling information gained in their ASDAN environment course in all areas of the curriculum.

## Progress in addressing recommendations from previous note of visit or inspection report

### **Recommendation 1:**

Carefully monitor and evaluate the impact of the new staffing structure to ensure that the college sustains and builds upon current standards and quality of provision.

### **Commentary:**

Senior managers carefully monitor and evaluate the impact of the staffing structure as part of an overall focus on improving quality.

## Inspection findings

### **1. How good are outcomes?**

All learners achieve well.

Higher attaining learners begin to work independently with minimal support. In cookery, they follow recipes, count and weigh ingredients and handle knives and equipment with care. In creativity, learners use the computers well to present and research their work. In numeracy, learners successfully divide 12 into 4 parts using coloured counters. They understand the meaning of equal and divide apples into quarters. These learners have good opportunities to gain a range of ASDAN and literacy, numeracy and computer skills qualifications.

The college also makes very good use of local colleges such as Barry and Glan Hafren. Learners have gained AS level accreditation in music technology and English literature and GCSE Art. One learner has gone on to do a degree in music.

Lower attaining learners learn to work alongside others and tolerate being part of a group. They learn to recognise shapes and colours. They approach activities in their get up and go sessions calmly, follow instructions and improve their hand eye coordination.

All learners improve how well they manage their behaviour. A few learners who had particularly challenging behaviour perform to the rest of the group and wait their turn. For them, this is an outstanding achievement.

### **2. How good is provision?**

All teaching is good or outstanding. The outstanding features are:

- a fully differentiated curriculum;
- tailor made resources to match individual needs;
- very clear explanations with high expectations;

- full use of the target setting within the individual learning plans to inform teachers' planning;
- a range of activities, carefully time limited with independent learning opportunities for higher attaining learners;
- affirmation throughout lessons when learners have achieved their targets; and
- excellent support from learning support assistants who work with the whole class rather than an individual.

However, the senior lecturer in the new Woodlands classroom does not have the benefit of learning support assistants in his lessons, despite having a group with very complex needs.

Learners have improved access to the world of work such as working in a hospice, a charity shop, a supermarket and a local cattery.

In their ASDAN environment course, learners gain valuable information about the benefits of re-cycling. However, they do not have enough opportunities to put recycling into practice across the college.

The college has recently opened a classroom in the Woodlands unit for learners with more challenging behaviour. However, learners are not always encouraged to attend and on occasion remain in their rooms.

The college has recently introduced two tutor groups for learners with profound and multiple difficulties based on a sensory approach. This new arrangement is working well. These learners access a good range of appropriate activities which meet their needs well. Teachers include the use of symbols and pictures to support the learners' understanding of the lesson.

Staff give learners very good support and make flexible arrangements to support learners' improving behaviour. For example, a regular walk to select and buy a newspaper becomes part of a learners' personal routine.

Learners have very good access to a wide range of therapies and professionals. The college has an appropriate focus on extending the use of non verbal communication strategies. However, this does not yet apply to all areas of the college

The college provides a stimulating learning environment with attractive displays of learners' work.

### **3. How good are leadership and management?**

The Principal and her senior management team work very well together to provide a high quality learning environment.

New staff receive very good quality induction. This includes a 'firewalk' so that they know how to support the safe evacuation in the event of a fire. The college is working in partnership with the local authority so that there are improved and innovative arrangements to support the development and training of newly qualified teachers.

The college has introduced a wide range of measures to support its vision of progress for each individual.

Senior managers undertake very good quality monitoring of teaching and learning. All teaching staff use comprehensive weekly planners. These planning folders contain teachers' assessments of how well they have achieved their aims, what they have learned about their practices, where they have been less successful and what changes they will make to their planning. Teachers hand these planners in regularly to senior managers and they receive careful written feedback to help them improve their practice.

The college development plan is carefully linked to the self assessment process. Within these documents there are specific and measurable targets which are time limited.

The college is well resourced and has recently created a new multi-sensory room with enough room for a whole class. The Woodlands unit now has a classroom for four learners. However, this classroom is also the dining room. This limits the quality of the provision.