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Ms W Williams
Principal
Regent College
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Dear Ms Williams

Short inspection of Regent College

Following the short inspection on 4–5 December 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 February 2014.

This provider continues to be good.

You, your staff and the advisory board members have high expectations for your learners. You and your team are dedicated to improving the short- and longer-term prospects for your learners. You ensure that learners improve their independence through the good development of their communication, vocational, social and life skills. Most learners are making good or better progress from their starting points and towards achieving their goals and aspirations.

Staff have worked hard with community partners to develop new and challenging learning opportunities for learners, which take place in the heart of the community. As a result, learners participate in a wide range of external work experience placements, volunteering and supported internships, for example, at:

- the university food court (preparing food and serving customers)
- a country park (producing wood products for sale)
- a community park regeneration project (recycling donated items for use in craft and community projects)
- a hairdressing salon (assisting hairstylists)
- a theatre (meeting and greeting guests).

To ensure continuous improvements to learners' experiences, you have invested significantly in staff training, new learning environments and new staff roles. These include:

- all tutors recently achieving the level 5 diploma in teaching disabled learners
- nearly half the learning support workers (LSWs) achieving the level 3 learning support practitioner qualification
- the introduction of a new personal tutor role, so that learners receive a more consistent, high-quality service
- the introduction of mobile rebound therapy, in partnership with a charitable foundation, which has improved the sensory curriculum offer and has enabled many learners to use a trampoline for the first time
- the introduction of formal observations of support provided to learners by LSWs.

As a result of these investments, the quality of teaching, learning and support has improved further since the previous inspection.

You and your team have successfully addressed most of the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection:

- You and your managers have provided staff with the opportunity to participate in higher-level training and to achieve the associated qualifications. You have encouraged tutors to share their innovative practice in teaching and learning with each other. As a result, your recent assessments of the quality of learning in sessions suggest that most learners now benefit from good or better learning experiences.
- You have ensured that most learners' targets are more meaningful and accessible. As a result, and where appropriate, learners have a good understanding of the progress that they have made and know how to improve further.
- You have provided staff with additional training on further developing learners' English skills. As a result, learners develop their speaking and listening skills well in lessons and community settings. However, tutors do not plan well enough for a few learners to develop their reading and writing skills in lessons.

Safeguarding is effective

Leaders, managers, staff and advisory board members place a high priority on making sure that learners and staff are safe in all learning settings. Leaders and managers have ensured that all learners who undertake work experience, supported internships and volunteering in community settings are supervised and supported effectively by well-trained LSWs.

Staff use the carefully designed placement induction pack to ensure that learners are prepared well prior to participating in community-based activities. Staff provide employers with essential written information regarding learners' skills, abilities and

support needs. However, not all community-based staff who work alongside learners have received this helpful information, and very few have received training to help them have a better understanding of what to expect and how they can support learners better to develop further their skills, standards and behaviours.

The development and use of the 'How do you feel?' file by tutors and LSWs in sessions are thoughtful and effective. This well-designed and innovative resource helps learners with limited verbal communication skills to express themselves more effectively with their peers and with staff. As a result, the number of behaviour incidents that relate to learners' anger and frustration, when not being able to communicate, has reduced.

Incident reporting was identified as requiring further improvement at the previous inspection. The improved process has resulted in leaders and managers receiving a chronological account of the actions taken by staff in response to an incident, feedback from learners and the outcomes of actions taken. Leaders and managers monitor trends and patterns of incidents on a monthly basis, and use the information well to inform improvement strategies and staff training. The most common incidents are self-harming, learners' physical aggression against staff and unsociable behaviour. As a result, staff are trained in restraint and conflict resolution. They receive good support from specialist staff, such as behaviour coaches and speech and language therapists, and they are provided with comprehensive support plans for each learner. Staff meet weekly and analyse changes in learners' behaviour. They agree and implement the appropriate remedial actions.

The college's safeguarding procedures, including the recruitment of staff, meet the statutory requirements.

Inspection findings

- Most tutors plan learning and assessment effectively and, consequently, learners understand their targets and develop good skills over time. However, a few teachers do not plan well enough how LSWs can best contribute to learning and assessment for each learner. They do not evaluate the small steps of progress made by a few learners. A few learners' targets are not updated so that they know what to do to improve, and to ensure that they continue to make good progress in developing their skills. As a result, a few learners do not make the expected progress in lessons.
- Most tutors plan how learners will improve their speaking, listening, reading and writing skills well in lessons. Consequently, learners improve the quality of their writing, are able to read more complex words, sit quietly and listen while other learners speak, and develop their confidence when initiating conversations with others. However, learners do not develop further their mathematics and problem-solving skills in lessons well enough.
- Learners' progression from college into further education, volunteering and/or supported internships is very good and has improved since the previous

inspection. However, too few of the most able learners progress into paid employment.

- Leaders and managers work well with a wide range of external partners. As a result, learners receive good, impartial careers advice and guidance. Learners and their families receive information about the range of opportunities available to them from partners, such as advocacy and careers services, so that they are able to make well-informed choices which are relevant to life after college.
- The highly responsive curriculum meets the educational and support needs of individual learners well. For example, a few most able learners attend a mathematics class at a local further education college, which has enabled them to undertake a higher level of learning alongside other college learners. A few learners are mentored by coaches at a local football club and are working towards achieving a football coaching qualification.
- Learners are prepared well for adulthood by undertaking travel training and they improve their communication skills by participating in a wide range of community activities – for example, raising money to purchase sports kits and equipment for children in South Africa for a local charity, collecting donations for the local food bank and packing gift boxes for the homeless people in the community.
- Staff work hard to provide learners with purposeful and good-quality work experience, volunteering and supported internships, which relate directly to their interests and long-term goals. These provide them with the opportunity to develop further a wide range of skills and improve their independence, which prepares them well for life after college. For example, learners improve their ability to work with others and increase their social interaction skills by taking drink and snack orders from customers and initiating conversations with work colleagues. They learn to follow instructions and take the lead on tasks, such as planning and presenting at an event for children at a local school.
- Staff employed at community settings are friendly and work hard to make learners feel part of the team. Learners are supported well by key workers to achieve appropriate targets, and they receive regular feedback on their strengths and weaknesses. As a result, they become less reliant on support and more independent, and make good progress over time. Most learners continue to volunteer at their placements after they leave college.
- Advisory board members are highly committed to the college and its learners. They have a wide range of expertise and experience in educating and working with learners with high needs. They provide leaders and managers with well-informed challenge and helpful advice. Consequently, leaders and managers receive good-quality support, which they use well to inform their decision-making and improvement actions.

Next steps for the provider

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- all teachers plan for the effective use of LSWs, so that they maximise learning and assessment opportunities for each learner in all learning settings and use

naturally occurring opportunities well to develop further all learners' reading, writing, mathematics and problem-solving skills

- leaders and managers develop additional supported internships, increase the progression opportunities for learners into paid employment, and continue to develop learners' social and vocational skills, behaviours and the standard of their work by developing further the collaboration and partnership-working arrangements and increasing the social enterprise activities in the community
- where appropriate, and with the permission of learners and/or their families, information is shared about learners' support needs with the community staff who are working directly with them, providing them with training and advice about what learners with high needs can do and can achieve in the workplace and community, so that they can support learners more effectively to develop further their skills, standards and behaviours
- managers undertake visits to a wider range of other providers, so that they can learn from the sector's good practice and help inform management development planning and decision-making.

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 teaching and learning, as nominee. We met with managers, advisory board members of Regent College, LSWs, teachers and learners. With members of your staff, we reviewed learners' work and progress tracking systems, and observed teaching, learning and assessment in a range of community settings. We reviewed key documents, including those relating to strategic planning; self-assessment; teaching, learning and assessment; performance and destination data, and safeguarding.