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Ms Grainne O'Reilly
Head of Education
William Morris House
Eastington
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Dear Ms O'Reilly

Short inspection of William Morris House

Following the short inspection on 15 and 16 June 2016, 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 college was judged to be good in March 2012.

This provider continues to be good.

Students continue to receive good education and training. The college has faced significant challenges since the previous inspection including a reduction in enrolments and significant changes to the student cohort. Trustees and senior managers recognised that they needed to refocus the provision. They have implemented relevant changes in order to ensure the needs of all students are well met, including a more structured approach to the delivery of study programmes and a restructure of staffing.

Senior managers have acted effectively to address most of the areas identified for improvement at the previous inspection. The assessment of students' core skills and the tracking and monitoring of their progress is now much improved. Literacy and numeracy are fully integrated into students' study programmes.

Students' outcomes remain good. Students achieve their targets and make good progress, where appropriate, onto further training or employment. They also make good progress onto their intended living arrangements, with many able to live more independently. Senior managers acknowledge that data on students' outcomes needs to be presented in a clearer format. Senior managers analyse this data well; there are no gaps in the performance of different groups of students.

You and the senior managers have maintained and further developed good links with the local authority, a broad range of local employers and a national employer.

As a result, the range of external work experience opportunities has increased significantly and students benefit from taking part in more than one work placement linked to their interests and career aspirations.

Trustees continue to provide support; however, in the past they were slow to recognise and respond to the challenges facing the college. Several trustees decided to step down from the role over the past 12 months and new ones have been appointed. Current trustees have fully supported senior managers' improvement measures to ensure the continued success and sustainability of the college.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding arrangements are detailed and thorough. The head of care is the lead officer for safeguarding in the college and is trained to an appropriate level. All other staff and trustees receive regular training in safeguarding. The central record is up to date and comprehensive.

Your arrangements to ensure the safety of all students and to help them understand how to keep safe, including when using the internet, are good. The 'helping hand' system is particularly good and ensures all students have a designated member of staff to refer to should they have any concerns.

Staff deal appropriately with the small number of serious incidents. Incident logs are detailed and clearly show how staff follow up any incidents. The lead for safeguarding thoroughly analyses all incidents to identify trends and patterns. Staff use the information well to help reduce incidents. For example, staff were able to identify why there was a deterioration in the behaviour of one student at particular times of the month. They then put measures in place which ensured her behaviour improved significantly.

Cyber safety, British values, tolerance and respect are covered well with all students in discrete sessions and through the curriculum. Managers have developed a good policy to cover the requirements of the 'Prevent' duty, with guidance in place to help staff ensure the protection and safety of all students. Staff and trustees are trained and understand their responsibilities under the 'Prevent' duty.

Inspection findings

- Actions taken and measures put in place by the senior management team over the last 12 months, supported by the trustees, have ensured the continued stability and success of the college. Trustees and senior managers realise that the college needs to refocus in order to remain sustainable. The whole focus of the work of the college changed from a community-based approach, which predominantly focused on workshops where students could develop craft and creative skills, to a more structured approach to providing study programmes. The college instigated a full restructure of staffing in April 2015 and an interim strategic director was appointed in July of the same year. This resulted in a number staff skilled in

their craft but not qualified teachers voluntarily leaving the college. All teaching staff are now qualified or working towards teaching qualifications. The senior management team and trustees have well-developed strategic plans in place and are very clear about what they need to do to ensure the continued success of the college.

- You have implemented the study programme well. Programmes meet the individual needs of each student well and provide them with an individual timetable. Work experience is well planned and students have appropriate external work experience linked to their interests and aspirations. English and mathematics are integrated well into the study programme. Students make good progress in improving their levels of ability. They successfully progress onto further training or into employment or voluntary work. All students take part in a wide range of additional activities based on their interests such as football, swimming, horsemanship, cooking and crafts. Students develop very good skills to enable them to live as independently as possible.
- The assessment of students' skills and the measuring of students' progress was an area for development at the previous inspection. The college has made good progress in establishing thorough assessments of students' core activities during their first six weeks at college. All staff working with students contribute to these assessments; they make good use of previous educational records and education, health and care plans. These reliably establish starting points from which to measure students' subsequent progress. Greatly improved systems effectively capture students' progress against their learning targets at the end of every learning activity. However, although most students' targets are well-designed to capture small steps of progress, a small number are too large to be measured in the allocated time frame.
- At the previous inspection, numeracy, literacy and discrete functional skills provision were not sufficiently developed. The college has made good progress in the integration of literacy and numeracy in all learning activities and in providing discrete sessions for students capable of taking qualifications. Oral communication skills are at the heart of students' programmes and all learning includes speaking and listening activities, with signing or symbol support where necessary. Staff develop students' mathematics skills well through all practical activities and include measuring, weighing, calculating quantities, costing, and timekeeping. Students effectively evaluate their own progress at the end of each learning session.
- The good range of leisure and therapeutic activities identified at the previous inspection has been maintained. Students attend music, dance and astronomy courses at a local general further education (GFE) college and all students attend a range of community engagement activities. This helps to widen students' experiences and enables them to develop new interests. Well-managed and well-integrated therapeutic activities include speech and language support, counselling and occupational therapy assessments from

National Health Service staff. Students also take part in useful 'handle' sessions, a form of brain gym, which several staff are trained to deliver. The college system of recording progress against targets has only recently begun to allow managers to evaluate the effectiveness of therapeutic interventions.

- At the previous inspection the opportunities for students to develop a wider range of cooking skills were limited; these are now much improved. Students also attend catering courses at the local GFE college or engage in small-scale catering at work experience placements in cafes.
- The promotion of equality within the college is good and an atmosphere of mutual respect prevails. In almost every session there are practical instances of equality and diversity in action. Examples include projects that promote the diversity of art forms worldwide, the acceptance and support of gender uncertainty, the promotion of the need for personal space or the freedom of choice in clothing. A world festivals session on Fridays offers students the experience of learning about celebrations in other cultures. Staff also devise activities in personal development programmes as needs arise to help individual students avoid giving offence to others or being distressed themselves by discriminatory behaviour.
- At the previous inspection, the use of feedback from students and parents or carers to help improve provision was an area for improvement. Communication between college staff and parents, both formally and informally, has improved significantly. Meetings where parents can air their views are held more frequently and staff now have an open door approach so parents are able to contact college staff at any time. Students now share much more information with parents about their programme, their targets and goals and how well they are progressing. The collection and use of student feedback has improved since the last inspection. Each student has a personal tutor and designated time to discuss their views about their experience in college and staff make improvements when issues are identified. Staff have completed some work on evaluation of the study programme, based on feedback from students, but managers acknowledge that there is more work to be done in this area and in using the feedback to inform the self-assessment report.
- Senior managers have made good progress since a complete college restructure 12 months ago. They have made a concerted effort to support new tutors. This support is having a tangible impact on students' achievements through improved teaching and learning. Staff speak highly of the very good staff training they have had this year and how it helps them work with students with very challenging behaviour. Staff also value the training opportunities they have had such as being able to study for teaching qualifications and a level 5 qualification in care. They report that staff training is now prioritised by the senior managers.

Next steps for the provider

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the changes to the curriculum and staffing structure implemented this year are fully evaluated to ensure the continued sustainability of the college and the continued good achievements for all students
- students' good outcomes are collated and presented in a clearer format
- feedback from students, parents and carers and information from the evaluation of the study programmes is used in the self-assessment of provision to help bring about further improvement
- all students' targets are well-designed to capture progress in small steps and to enable measurement of their achievement in a reasonable time frame.

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

Yours sincerely

Margaret Swift
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection we were assisted by the head of education, as nominee. We met with the interim strategic director, the head of care, the chair of trustees, tutors, students and other staff. We carried out lesson observations and visited students on work experience. We reviewed strategic and policy documents, including documents relating to individual students, the overall performance of William Morris House and safeguarding.