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Ms Joanne Rees-Proud
Head of College
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Dear Ms Rees-Proud

Short inspection of Hedleys College

Following the short inspection on 2 and 3 March 2016, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the provider was judged to be good in November 2011.

This provider continues to be good.

At the last inspection, this provision was called Northern Counties College. In 2012, the college was renamed Percy Hedley College and in summer 2015 was further renamed Hedleys College. During this time, the senior leadership team has been significantly strengthened by the addition of a quality manager and an assessment and standards manager. Your increased management capacity over the last four years has enabled you to increase student numbers, develop programmes that meet the individual needs of your students and have effective management of your split-site campus.

You and the senior leadership team have maintained strong and very effective links with local and regional partners. Through these, you have continued to provide a range of programmes and projects that meet the needs of students, employers and local communities particularly well.

At your previous inspection, your board of governors was judged to be good and provided a clear strategic direction that has been maintained well. Your board of trustees delegates duties to college governors who have an extensive range of expertise and educational experience that they use well.

You have implemented the 19 to 25 study programmes exceptionally well. All programmes meet students' identified needs and provide extensive work experience opportunities. In particular, your provision for students with complex and profound

needs is very effective.

Outcomes for students are good. Students are successful in achieving a wide range of qualifications. Inspectors noted, and your self-assessment report identifies, that greater use of recognising and recording progress and achievement (RARPA) for students with complex and profound needs is a priority for the coming year. You have collected and analysed students' destination data for the past three years. Analysis of students' individual learning plans shows a good match between students' goals and their destinations.

Safeguarding is effective.

The senior leadership team has a very clear and effective structure for managing safeguarding throughout The Percy Hedley Foundation. The policies and procedures take account of recent legislation and you have produced an additional 'Prevent' duty policy. All staff have had 'Prevent' duty training. The teaching of British values through the focus of citizenship is effective for all students, but particularly so for those with more complex and profound needs. Staff are particularly good at modelling respectful attitudes.

Well-trained staff and the designated safeguarding officers create good links between the college, residential staff and relevant agencies. You have a clear and strong focus on the vulnerability of students in the college and how best to keep them safe. Staff use separate e-safety and behaviour files well to record incidents. You have a good strategy in place to support staff to manage those students with life-limiting conditions.

Inspection findings

- The senior leadership team have made significant improvements to quality assurance and quality improvement plans since the last inspection. Your self-assessment report is accurate. Your detailed accommodation strategy recognises the differences in quality of accommodation at your two sites and you propose to build a single new campus.
- Initial and baseline assessments of students are accurate, thorough and skilfully constructed by the multidisciplinary team. The team employs a wide range of strategies including a detailed pre-course process that gathers information from families and carers, schools, specialists, previous reports, plans, reviews, and information from the students themselves. Staff use the assessments to establish students' starting points, identify an individual curriculum pathway and set individualised, realistic and challenging targets.
- The college systematically and carefully monitors progress towards targets and goals using the management information system and feedback from staff, students and others, including employers and community stakeholders. Regular and frequent progress reviews measure students' progress and achievement well.
- At the last inspection, the teaching of English and mathematics was an area for improvement. The senior leadership team has worked hard and successfully to embed the teaching of these skills across the curriculum. For

example, students now learn to calculate, practise time-keeping, work out a budget and plan schedules. They use communication strategies well to make choices, requests, record their own work and progress, and express opinions.

- The most effective lessons are in practical settings like cooking, social enterprise and community-based activities. In a small minority of lessons, teachers do not take account of each student's specific needs. Students with more complex and profound needs do not have specific targets for the development of their mathematical skills. Teachers do not always build sufficiently on the prior learning of students in this area.
- Resources, therapy and support are very good. The team of 11 highly experienced and enthusiastic therapists support students and teachers well. The team provides physiotherapy, occupational and speech and language therapies and nursing support. The Tankerville Terrace campus has an impressive range of high-quality, modern and fully-adapted resources including one hydrotherapy pool, a full size swimming pool, a specialist gymnasium for boccia and wheelchair basketball, and a fully equipped independence kitchen with living room space. These resources are used very well to support students' progress.
- Therapists provide the wider staff team with high-quality professional training; for example in the use of squeeze vests, dysphasia awareness and behaviour strategies that enable students to take part, learn, make progress and achieve.
- Therapists work extremely well with education staff. They jointly identify targets in, for example, communication, physical well-being and personal hygiene. They initiate themed events such as activities around drinking enough water. The therapist-led travel training programmes lead to students becoming more independent and self-confident.
- Students' personal development is good. They grow in confidence as they build up their skills, knowledge and understanding. Students make a formal application to the very successful employability project. By doing this they develop their sense of ambition, citizenship and pride in skills learned and tasks undertaken successfully.
- The employability project is very successful. For example, students have gone on to work placements in real business settings where they work alongside managers who expect the same quality of work from them as they do from their employees. This has led to two supported internships and employment. For example, one young person leaving college this year will become an intern in September with a company that plans to train and then employ him. Two students who left college recently have set up their own businesses providing disc jockey services for parties and other events.
- Students' work in local businesses is promoting positive attitudes about people who have disability in the wider community. One employer commented that having a student on placement has taught him to be less judgemental. A member of the public took the time to tell inspectors how much students working in a local café had improved and grown in confidence over time.
- Students have increased personal ambition because of work placements, social enterprise and community activities. They are positive about their improved life chances in getting work, volunteering, living with more independence and contributing to their local community.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are good. The rigorous observation

process ensures that all teachers and the majority of support staff are observed regularly. The focus of observation is the impact their professional skills have on students' learning and progress. Standards are high. Observations of activities run by the remaining support staff will be included in the observation schedule in the near future.

- Senior staff observers identify training needs following observations. Line managers monitor action plans resulting from observations carefully, but the time lapse between reviews of progress is too long in some cases.

Next steps for the provider

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- staff set targets in mathematics for students with more complex and profound needs in order to build on learning and promote achievement
- plans to observe all support staff are fully implemented so that their work can be fully evaluated when considering the progress of students
- line managers monitor action plans frequently following lesson observations to evaluate the impact support and training are having on improving outcomes for students
- senior leaders evaluate the use of qualifications and RARPA in the curriculum for students with more complex and profound needs so that achievement of small steps in learning can be fully recognised.

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

Gill Reay
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, the quality and standards manager, as nominee, assisted us. We met with the head of college and senior leaders. We visited two sites and work placements to observe teaching, learning and assessment and look at students' work. We held meetings with students, staff and employers. We reviewed documents relating to individual students, overall performance of the college and safeguarding.