

Green Laund Further Education Centre

**Inspection of FEFC-funded provision in
non-sector establishments for students with
learning difficulties and/or disabilities**

November 2000

**REPORT FROM
THE INSPECTORATE
2000-01**

***THE FURTHER EDUCATION
FUNDING COUNCIL***

The Further Education Funding Council has a legal duty to secure provision for individual students in England with learning difficulties and/or disabilities where sector provision is inadequate. When it exercises this duty, the Council makes a contract with the establishment making the provision. The contract includes the right of inspection.

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GRADE DESCRIPTORS

The procedures for assessing quality are described in Council Circulars 97/12 and 97/22. During their inspection, inspectors assess the strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum and other aspects of provision they inspect. Their assessments are set out in the report. They use a five-point scale to summarise the balance between strengths and weaknesses.

The descriptors for the grades are:

- *grade 1 - outstanding provision which has many strengths and few weaknesses*
- *grade 2 - good provision in which the strengths clearly outweigh the weaknesses*
- *grade 3 - satisfactory provision with strengths but also some weaknesses*
- *grade 4 - less than satisfactory provision in which the weaknesses clearly outweigh the strengths*
- *grade 5 - poor provision which has few strengths and many weaknesses*

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Summary

Independent Establishment 07/00

Inspection of FEFC-Funded Provision in the non-sector establishment for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Green Laund Further Education Centre, Derbyshire

November 2000

Green Laund Further Education Centre, in Mickleover, Derbyshire, is part of the Honormead group of schools and adult services. The centre offers full-time residential education and training programmes for seven students with learning difficulties and speech and language disorders. All students are aged 19 or over. At the time of the inspection two students were funded by the FEFC.

The centre provides an environment in which speech, language, and literacy skills are supplemented or replaced by signs and symbols. Each student has an individual timetable which includes self-care, skills for every day living, communication, constructive use of leisure time, and some pre-vocational skills. Some students attend adult education classes with support from Green Laund staff. A garden centre, run by the same company, shares a site with Green Laund. Students can undertake some work experience in the garden centre and a small canteen, which caters for staff and school students on work experience. Many lessons are conducted in the

community around the college. The students now attending the centre have more severe difficulties than those who were on roll at the time of the previous inspection in June 1996. The content of students' programmes has changed in recognition of this and is no longer based on skills for employment and independent living.

Green Laund is successful in enabling students to learn in a wide variety of real adult life environments. Students are well supported in their learning. Staff have successfully adapted the provision to meet the needs of more disabled students. They are effective in modifying students' inappropriate behaviours and expectations. Students achieve good levels of skills and behaviours that enable them to lead more successful adult lives. However, the centre is less successful in encapsulating what it does in the paperwork associated with the curriculum and students individual programmes. Students' base-line assessments and the programmes based on them do not reflect the whole of students' learning experience at Green Laund. They sometimes cloud the perception of the staff about what they are actually doing. The provision could be further improved by reworking the curriculum and students' individual learning programmes so that they match the real work of the centre.

Inspectors agreed with the centre's evaluation of the quality of its work. The work funded by the FEFC was judged to have strengths which clearly

Summary

outweighed the weaknesses and was awarded a grade 2.

Context

The Establishment and its Mission

1 Green Laund Further Education Centre, in Mickleover, Derbyshire, offers full-time residential education and training programmes for seven students with moderate or severe learning difficulties and complex speech and language disorders. The centre provides a total communication environment in which speech is augmented by signing. At the time of the inspection two students were funded by the FEFC. All students at Green Laund are nineteen years old or over.

2 Green Laund is part of the Honormead Schools Ltd and is located on the same site as a large and popular garden centre which is also part of the Honormead company. Students have some work experience in the garden centre and in a small canteen which is provided for staff and school students who also have work experience placements on the site. Some students attend daytime adult education classes with support from Green Laund staff. Much of the students' learning is practical and takes place in the local community.

3 The provision aims to achieve positive outcomes for each young person through:

- participating in the community
- increasing competences
- exercising individual choice
- gaining self-esteem
- sustaining and widening friendships.

Programmes are based on the principles of inclusive learning. The students now attending the centre have more severe difficulties than those who were on the register at the time of the previous inspection in June 1996. The content of students' programmes has also changed and now includes fewer vocational activities than before.

4 Each student has an individual timetable which includes self-care, skills for every day living, further education, social communication, and constructive use of leisure time and vocational skills.

5 Students are accommodated in an extended house in single rooms with en-suite facilities. They are able to choose the basic décor of their rooms and can personalise them as they wish. The sitting room, leisure and dining room, kitchen and laundry are all used as environments for learning. A classroom has been built adjacent to the main house.

The inspection

6 Two inspectors carried out the inspection over two days. They observed 10 lessons and other activities where students were learning, held meetings with managers and talked informally with students and staff. Students' work and college documentation, including students' files, were examined.

7 The self-assessment report, the first undertaken by the college, was produced from contributions from all

Context

staff. It is detailed, with evidence provided for the judgements made. The report did not identify all the key strengths and weaknesses identified by inspectors. However, inspectors were in agreement with the college's assessment of the overall quality of its FEFC-funded work. The report includes a detailed action plan, which lists the names of those responsible for taking action, and target dates.

The Curriculum

Grade profile of lessons observed

Grade	1	2	3	4	5
Number of lessons	0	7	3	0	0

8 Inspectors agree with the self-assessment report that Green Laund is successful in enabling students to learn in a wide variety of real and appropriate environments. Students learned most effectively through practical activities. In an enjoyable individual cookery session students prepared individual evening meals for themselves. Students learned to occupy their free time constructively in the house. They learned social skills at the swimming pool, in local shops, at the library and at adult education classes. Domestic skills are taught routinely in the house. A student was observed successfully putting her basic skills into practice in the 'goods inwards' department of the garden centre. There is, however, too much reliance on accreditation to record students' achievements when many achievements are outside the scope of the accreditation used. This weakness is not included in the self-assessment report.

9 Staff have successfully adapted the provision to meet the needs of more disabled students. The curriculum has changed significantly as students need to be prepared for less independent adult lives than their predecessors. As the self-assessment report states, current students are unlikely to enter employment when they complete their course at Green Laund and so preparation for entry to work has been scaled down, as students now need an extended period of

education and training. The centre is effective in modifying students' inappropriate behaviours and expectations. Students achieve good levels of skills and behaviours which enable them to lead more successful adult lives. This major strength is included in the self-assessment report.

10 The centre has yet to find a way of describing succinctly in the paperwork associated with the curriculum and in students' individual programmes the nature and real worth of its work with students. This was not recognised in the self-assessment report. Students' baseline assessments and the programmes based on them do not reflect the whole of the students' learning experience at Green Laund and sometimes cloud the perception of the staff about what they are actually doing. The provision could be further improved by a reframing and rewording of the curriculum and of students' individual learning programmes. For example, one student's assessment states that she should work on number value and recognition, learn money value and use, practise time recognition, recognise the need for help when writing a letter, be able to use a word processor, and know how to use E-mail. Her actual goals, which are well understood in the centre, encompass the most important things she needs to become a more independent adult. These include the ability to behave

The Curriculum

appropriately, improved skills to communicate effectively, and the capacity to make choices and take more control of her adult life.

11 Students are taught individually, in pairs or in small groups according to the activity being undertaken. Students flourish because of the individual attention they receive. The centre acknowledges this strength in the self-assessment report.

Other Aspects of Provision

12 Students benefit from an appropriate range of high-quality support services which enable them to learn and achieve. These include:

- speech and language therapy
- physiotherapy
- support staff

The centre recognises this strength in the self-assessment report.

13 Support is carefully reduced as students gain skills which enable them to be more independent. The environment is sufficiently small and contained for the students to have considerable freedom in their choices of location for their own activities, so that their sense of independence is further increased. This strength is included in the self-assessment report.

14 Inspectors agree that the standard of resources for learning is good. All the equipment in the house is similar to that which students will encounter in their own homes or in group homes in the future. As all of the current students are likely to move on to group homes in the future, this environment is particularly useful for them. Students have access to computers with appropriate software, and e-mail and Internet facilities.

15 Although there is no explicit quality assurance policy for the centre to co-ordinate and inform quality assurance procedures, aspects of quality assurance practice, such as staff supervision and appraisal, teaching observations and evaluation of students' achievements are carried out. Although the nature of the

students has changed, the work remains of a good quality.

16 The college has a system for tracking the destinations and careers of college leavers and has used this information to inform the curriculum.

17 The centre is well-managed within the line management structure of Honormead. Staff work flexibly and take considerable trouble to ensure that students' needs are met.

18 The centre does not have a separate governing body. This would be inappropriate for its size. The staff and students are well served by the governors of the overall organisation who ensure that the work is considered and supported.

Conclusions

19 Key strengths

- good students' achievements in gaining skills and behaviour for a more successful adult life
- effective opportunities for students to learn in a wide range of real and appropriate environments
- substantial individually-tailored support within an environment of total communication
- effective modification of students' inappropriate behaviours and expectations
- well-considered adaptation of the curriculum to meet the needs of more severely disabled students.

20 Weaknesses

- lack of clear articulation of students' major learning needs in their individual learning plans
- inadequacies in the documentation of the curriculum and of students' programmes
- over-reliance on accreditation to record students' achievements.