



Independent specialist colleges

Generally, independent specialist colleges provide high levels of **care, support and guidance** that support learners' **well-being** successfully.

What's going well

- Overall, colleges provide calm, supportive and nurturing environments.
- Throughout the pandemic, colleges have continued to adapt their approaches flexibly to meet the needs of learners. As a result, learners have high levels of well-being and have continued to make suitable progress in their learning.

What needs to improve

- The co-ordination of specialist support to meet learners' complex needs is too variable. Staff don't consistently understand and apply communication strategies to support learners' communication needs.



Overall, colleges offer authentic **learning experiences** and their **approaches to teaching** help learners to develop their skills and understanding effectively.

What's going well

- Tutors and support staff provide attentive and caring support. They know the needs of their learners well and build strong working relationships with them.
- Generally, tutors plan carefully to provide a relevant and meaningful range of learning experiences. This helps to support the development of learners' resilience, independence and life skills.
- Tutors manage risks associated with the workplace carefully and learners develop a strong understanding of relevant health and safety considerations.

What needs to improve

- Teaching does not always meet the complex needs of learners well enough.
- There is too much variability in the quality of support provided by support staff.



Leaders continue to be resilient and flexible as they build back from the pandemic and plan for improvement.

What's going well

- College leaders have provided strong day-to-day leadership throughout the pandemic.
- They have adjusted their provision flexibly to continue to provide education and meet the changing needs of learners.
- Where leadership is particularly strong, leaders have driven long-term strategic improvements to their provision, including the development of new facilities for learning.

What needs to improve

- [Professional learning does not focus well enough on supporting learning in a specialist setting.](#)
- Self-evaluation and quality assurance processes do not consistently focus on the impact of teaching on learners' standards and progress.
- The recruitment and retention of suitably experienced and qualified teaching support staff continue to be a challenge.