

# Peter Symonds College

Inspection report for further education college

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<b>Address</b>	Peter Symonds College Owens Road WINCHESTER Hampshire SO22 6RX
<b>Telephone number</b>	01962 857500
<b>Email</b>	principal@psc.ac.uk
<b>Registered person</b>	Peter Symonds College
<b>Head of care</b>	Andy Pond
<b>Head / Principal</b>	Neil Hopkins
<b>Date of last inspection</b>	29 November 2004

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## About this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcome for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and relevant National Minimum Standards for the establishment.

## The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding:	this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality
Good:	this aspect of the provision is strong
Satisfactory:	this aspect of the provision is sound
Inadequate:	this aspect of the provision is not good enough

## Service information

### Brief description of the service

Peter Symonds is a further education college for students aged between 16 & 19 years. There are two distinct and separate co-educational boarding houses located on the campus which between them can accommodate up to 80 students. Both boarding houses are purpose built with one dating back to Victorian times while the other was constructed in 1997. Accommodation in both houses is of a good standard, comprising mostly single and double rooms with a small number having three sharing. There are also some en-suite facilities. A Head of Boarding oversees the residential provision, residential and day house parents provide 24 hour support for boarding students, and the college has an extremely good working relationship with the local GP surgery. There are a wide range of facilities available on the campus for students and excellent individual support provided by the student services department. The college has long established links with the armed forces and the Falkland Islands, with applications from students with these connections being given priority for boarding. The college does not arrange lodgings or any other off site accommodation except for the purpose of organised trips.

### Summary

The college provides excellent written information for students and their parents in relation to boarding. The college's expectations of students are made explicit and there are clear details of the support services available. There are effective systems in place to identify those students with additional support needs and these students are extremely well supported. Students are made to feel welcome upon arrival at the college and are well supported within the boarding environment where there are positive relationships between house parents and students. The college has an excellent relationship with the local GP surgery which contributes to the provision of extremely good health care for students. Student services provide excellent and wide ranging support and information for students. There is an appropriate emphasis on health promotion/education, and this is well supported by an effective tutor system that operates for all students. The college provides a physical environment within which students feel safe and where their welfare is suitably protected by the provision for health and safety, and security across the campus. Boarding students get on fantastically well with one another, there is excellent communication between staff across the college and students are provided with a variety of ways in which to express their views and contribute to how the college operates. The college has a strong commitment to quality assurance and there is clear and effective leadership of the college's boarding provision. Comprehensive policies and procedures support and promote good practice across the college, however, the recruitment procedures in operation do not fully accord with the National Minimum Standards and are not being rigorously applied in all cases. The residential accommodation for students is of a good standard overall.

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

This is an overview of what the inspector found during the inspection.

### Improvements since the last inspection

The college has improved in the following areas since the previous inspection which was carried out during November 2004. A boarding intranet was introduced during 2007 which has enhanced communication and information sharing across the college to the benefit of boarding students. A new and improved system for providing access to boarding houses has increased security and safety for students. Students are now provided with clear guidelines in relation to the self

administration and storage of medication, a format for individual welfare plans has been introduced, there are first aid trained staff on site at all times, and boarding staff undertook mental health training during March 2005. There has also been an improvement in the provision for boarders to express their views, with the introduction of an annual survey entitled 'Student Perception of Boarding'. In addition to the above the college has now fully integrated the five 'Every Child Matters' outcome headings into its annual process of self assessment.

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is outstanding.

There is excellent provision at the college for meeting the health care needs of students. Students have access to a first aid nurse adviser during college hours, and there is a suitably qualified first aid staff member on site at all times. The college has an extremely good working relationship with the local surgery which students benefit from. A registered nurse from the surgery holds weekly clinics at the college and students have good access to a male or female GP, either independently or via college staff. Records of medication, illnesses, accidents, and injuries are maintained appropriately and effectively monitored. Students are provided with a lockable facility and clear guidelines in relation to storing and administering their own medication. The college has effective systems in place for identifying and supporting students who have additional support needs, for whatever reason. Welfare plans for individual students are drawn up when necessary and communicated to staff on a 'need to know' basis only. Students benefit from excellent levels of individual support and information that is available to them. 'Student Services' are located centrally on the college campus and provide good personal support, a wide range of health related information, and are able to 'signpost' students to external agencies when necessary. 'Health Awareness' campaigns are held regularly across the college and health related topics are covered during tutorial sessions. Student's health is also enhanced by the provision of nutritious and varied meals.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

Boarding students get on exceptionally well with one another and do not consider bullying to be a problem at the college. The issue of 'bullying' is covered with students as part of their 'general studies' programme, and there is a supporting policy in place for countering bullying which includes clear guidance for anyone subject to, or witnessing bullying behaviour. There are excellent arrangements in place at the college for ensuring students are protected from harm. There is a nominated Child Protection Officer who has two deputies, all of whom are senior members of staff and have undertaken training specific to the role. Staff receive training on child protection and have suitable access to appropriate supporting policy and procedures documents. An informative leaflet on child protection is given to all staff and contains details for dealing with a disclosure. Staff are suitably aware of the college's designated child protection officer and the relevant reporting procedures. Students are provided with an informative leaflet entitled 'Being Safe' which deals with personal safety, and they are also given practical guidelines should they be concerned for any reason about a fellow student. Students at the college feel well treated by staff and benefit from a clearly defined disciplinary policy that is fairly applied. A comprehensive and clearly written 'College Charter' forms part of the information given to all students and contains the college's expectations of students and their behaviour, which are stated explicitly. Records of significant sanctions are maintained appropriately and no unduly excessive sanctions are applied. The general standard of student behaviour at the college is

extremely good. Students at the college are freely able to approach a number of people with any concerns they may have. They are also aware of how to make a formal complaint about aspects affecting their welfare and there are clear procedures enabling them to do so. The college deals rigorously and effectively with any complaints received and maintains appropriate records in relation to these. Students and their parents are currently not made aware of how to contact Ofsted in relation to welfare complaints. Students are extremely well protected from the risk of fire. The fire safety arrangements at the college are deemed to be satisfactory by the fire authority, fire drills are carried out regularly, checks and tests of fire safety equipment are carried out as required, fire risk assessments are up to date for both boarding houses and records in relation to fire safety matters are being well maintained. Students receive a fire safety induction conducted by the fire authority, they are well aware of the emergency evacuation procedures and there are clear procedures for them to sign in and out. Students privacy is suitably respected while having due regard for their welfare. All students have rooms which they are able to lock internally, and all rooms contain a lockable space. There are clear guidelines for both entering, and for having to search a students room. The college site is monitored by close circuit television (CCTV) but this does not intrude in any way upon student privacy. The college has clear recruitment procedures, however, they do not fully accord with the National Minimum Standards. One member of ancillary staff had commenced employment prior to references and a Criminal Records Bureau check having been received. This is an isolated case but an indication that recruitment procedures are not being rigorously adhered to or effectively monitored. Students' residential accommodation at the college is for their dedicated use and suitably secure from public intrusion. Access to the accommodation can only be gained by the use of a fob key, and these are provided only to students and essential staff. There is no routine access to, or use of residential accommodation by anyone other than students and staff during term time, and there are clear guidelines for the appropriate supervision of the school's maintenance team and external contractors when accessing the boarding houses. Students at the college benefit from excellent provision for the management of risk across the campus. There is a culture within the college whereby safety is maintained as a high priority. Comprehensive policies and procedures underpin and promote good practice in relation to safety and there are established systems for ensuring a safe environment is provided for students, including the use of an external health and safety consultant and bi-annual health and safety audits across the college. An audit of the boarding provision this year commented extremely positively on the arrangements for health and safety. There is a health and safety committee that meets regularly, all staff cover health and safety as part of their induction to the college, and students are given practical advice in relation to safety. Risk assessments are reviewed and revised as necessary and records of accidents are analysed by the health and safety committee. Appropriate procedures are in place and rigorously applied to any hazardous pursuits or off site trips taking place.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is outstanding.

Students benefit from excellent levels of individual support being available to them. They all have allocated personal tutors with whom they meet regularly and who are easily accessible. House parents in both boarding houses are very approachable and students get to know them very well during their time at the college. Student services operate from a central point on the campus and provide a wide range of support for individual students, including signposting to external agencies when necessary. In addition, there is a counselling service available to students. The college chaplain holds a weekly drop in session on site, independent persons are available,

and students are provided with the contact details of independent help lines. The ability to provide support for individual students is considerably enhanced by the excellent systems of communication that operate across the college. The college has a strong commitment to ensuring equal opportunities for all, and students do not experience any inappropriate discrimination. There are effective systems for identifying those students with additional support needs prior to arrival and an excellent learning support department who ensure the needs of such students continue to be appropriately addressed during their time at the college. Students from the 'Falkland Islands' are currently not able to have admission interviews because of technological limitations. The college anticipate this problem will be resolved in the future, and continue to provide excellent support for those students who arrive at the college from the islands, where their experience of life is significantly different from their fellow students.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is outstanding.

Students benefit from having a variety of ways in which they can express their views and influence how the college operates. There are regular meetings held with course representatives, student views are represented through an elected student association, surveys of all students take place termly, residential students are surveyed for their views annually, issues can be raised during tutorials and all residential halls have an identified link warden. In addition, students are consulted about activities they would like to see provided on campus. Students at the college feel appropriately consulted about matters affecting them. All residential halls have telephones that can be used for emergency purposes and to receive incoming calls. There are also payphones at various locations around the campus and students have access to e-mail facilities. The majority of students have mobile phones and there is no concern among students about being able to contact their parents. Questionnaires received from parents commented positively about communication with the college and showed the college to be informing them appropriately about welfare matters affecting their children.

### **Achieving economic wellbeing**

The provision is outstanding.

The college does not accommodate any of its students in lodging arrangements. There are two separate and quite distinct boarding houses for students on the campus, and both provide a very good standard of accommodation. The welfare of students is extremely well safeguarded while being accommodated away from the college site. There are comprehensive procedures in place for all off site trips which are rigorously applied and effectively monitored by senior staff. The procedures meet the requirements of the National Minimum Standards and include provision to ensure relevant risk assessments have been carried out, that the accommodation has been assessed as suitable, that staffing levels are appropriate, and the needs of individual students are able to be met. In one instance a student had been enabled to undertake a trip overseas by the college providing a dedicated staff member for support.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is outstanding.

The college provides comprehensive information for boarding students and their parents which clearly describes the residential provision, the principles under which it operates and the support systems available to students. A student diary and boarders handbook provide students with valuable information and makes explicit the college rules and expectations of student behaviour.

In addition the college website provides easy access to college policies and procedures and students are happy with the level of information provided for them. Systems of communication and record keeping across the college contribute extremely effectively to student welfare. A relatively recently introduced 'boarders intranet' provides excellent access to information on a need to know basis and has enhanced the college's ability to support students. There are established systems in place for the monitoring of complaints, sanctions, accidents, and risk assessments, with appropriate action being taken to address any matters of concern. The college's head of boarding is an enthusiastic and forward thinking individual who provides an effective overview of the boarding provision, and is committed to it's continuing development. There is effective and appropriate supervision of boarding students, both during the college day, evenings, and at week ends. Residential, day and relief house parents operate a duty rota and students are aware of who is on duty at any given time. Students benefit from positive and mutually respectful relationships with house parents who are suitably experienced and able to provide appropriate support when needed. Telephone contact details for each boarding house are provided for students so they can make contact if necessary when off site. The college's house parents are clear about their responsibilities and lines of accountability. They operate effectively as a group and are successfully overseen by the head of boarding. There are systems in place for induction and appraisal, and very good opportunities for further training supported by the college.

## What must be done to secure future improvement?

### Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions, which must be taken so that the registered person meets the Care Standards Act 2000, and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider must comply with the given timescales.

Standard	Action	Due date
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### Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure that recruitment procedures accord fully with the National Minimum Standards, and that no staff member commences employment at the college until all the necessary checks have been carried out. (NMS 34) (Welfare Concern).
- include the contact details of the local children's services department in the college's child protection policy. (NMS 3)
- provide students and their parents with details of how to contact Ofsted in relation to any complaint concerning student welfare. (NMS 5)



## Annex

## Annex A

### National Minimum Standards for further education college

#### Being healthy

**The intended outcomes for these standards are:**

- under-age drinking, substance abuse and possession of obscene material by students are appropriately countered (NMS 6)
- students receive first aid and health care as necessary (NMS 14)
- students are adequately supervised when ill (NMS 15)
- students are supported in relation to any health or personal problems (NMS 16)
- students receive good quality catering provision (NMS 22)
- students have access to food and drinking water in addition to main meals (NMS 23)
- students are suitably accommodated when ill (NMS 43)

**Ofsted considers 14 and 16 the key standards to be inspected.**

#### Staying safe

**The intended outcomes for these standards are:**

- students are protected from bullying and harassment (NMS 2)
- students are protected from abuse (NMS 3)
- use of discipline with students is fair and appropriate (NMS 4)
- students' complaints are adequately responded to (NMS 5)
- students are protected from the risk of fire (NMS 24)
- the welfare of any young people accommodated by the college other than its own students is safeguarded and promoted (NMS 26)
- students' safety and welfare are protected during high risk activities (NMS 27)
- students' personal privacy is respected (NMS 33)
- there is careful selection and vetting of all staff and volunteers working with residential students (NMS 34)
- students are protected from unsupervised contact with adults who have not been, subject to the college's complete recruitment checking procedures (NMS 35)
- students have their own living accommodation, secure from public intrusion (NMS 37)
- any security or surveillance measures provide security to protect students without compromising their privacy (NMS 38)
- students are given reasonable protection from safety hazards (NMS 42)

**Ofsted considers 2, 3, 4, 5, 24, 33, 34, 35, 37 and 42 the key standards to be inspected.**

#### Enjoying and achieving

**The intended outcomes for these standards are:**

- students have access to a range and choice of activities (NMS 11)
- students receive personal support from staff (NMS 13)
- students do not experience inappropriate discrimination (NMS 17)
- student welfare is not compromised by unusual or onerous demands (NMS 25)
- students have access to a range of recreational areas (NMS 41)

**Ofsted considers 13 and 17 the key standards to be inspected.**

**Annex A**

### **Making a positive contribution**

**The intended outcomes for these standards are:**

- students are enabled to contribute to the operation of residential provision in the college (NMS 12)
- students can maintain private contact with their parents and families (NMS 18)
- students receive guidance, both on arrival at the college and in preparing to leave the college (NMS 20)
- there are sound relationships between staff and students (NMS 32)

**Ofsted considers 12 and 18 the key standards to be inspected.**

### **Achieving economic well-being**

**The intended outcomes for these standards are:**

- the college's organisation of residential provision safeguards students' welfare (NMS 10)
- students' personal possessions and money are protected (NMS 19)
- students are provided with satisfactory living accommodation (NMS 36)
- students have satisfactory sleeping accommodation (NMS 39)
- students have adequate and adequately private toilet and washing facilities (NMS 40)
- there are arrangements to ensure that students' clothing and bedding are adequately laundered (NMS 44)
- students can buy food and personal requisites while accommodated at college (NMS 45)
- the welfare of students placed in lodgings by the college is safeguarded and promoted (NMS 46)
- the welfare of students is safeguarded and promoted when accommodated away from the college site on a short-stay basis (NMS 47)

**Ofsted considers 46 and 47 the key standards to be inspected.**

### **Organisation**

**The intended outcomes for these standards are:**

- a clear statement of the principles of residential provision and student support at the college is available to those needing this information (NMS 1)
- the safeguarding and promotion of students' health and welfare are supported by appropriate records (NMS 7)
- there is clear leadership of residential provision in the college (NMS 8)
- crises affecting students' welfare are managed effectively (NMS 9)
- risk assessment and college record keeping contribute to students' welfare (NMS 21)
- students are appropriately supervised during free time (NMS 28)
- students are adequately supervised by staff (NMS 29)
- staff responsible for residential students have specific residential and welfare duties, with adequate induction and continued training (NMS 30)
- students are looked after by staff following clear residential and welfare policies and practice (NMS 31)

**Ofsted considers 1, 21, 29 and 30 the key standards to be inspected.**