

Bridgwater College

Further education college residential provision

Inspection dates		17 – 19 March 2015
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Outstanding-1
	Previous inspection:	Outstanding-1
Outcomes for learners		Outstanding-1
Quality of service		Outstanding-1
Safeguarding		Outstanding-1
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Outstanding-1

Summary of key findings

This college is outstanding because:

- The academic achievement of residential learners is consistently higher than their non-residential peers.
- Residential learners benefit by receiving support from a very committed, dedicated and exceptionally well-trained team.
- The safety and well-being of residential learners is one of the core values of the college. It is embedded throughout all their practice. This enables residential learners to develop their understanding and skills to ensure their own safety.
- Excellent links and communication across all aspects of the college ensure residential learners benefit from a holistic and consistent care system.
- Leadership and management are strong and committed to driving improvement. The leadership team inspire all college staff to provide residential learners with an outstanding experience at the college.
- Residential learners develop into effective members of their immediate and wider community. This derives from the college community ethos and developing tolerance and understanding of those they come into contact with.
- Residential learners are enabled to achieve. They gain the skills and qualification they need to make them very employable.
- The college has very robust and honest monitoring and evaluation systems. These enable staff to continuously improve the service they provide.

Full report

What does the college need to do to improve further?

- Should the College need to recruit new lodgings providers the records they maintain should be in line with the College staff recruitment records.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Outstanding
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- Residential learners benefit from living in a highly inclusive residential community where they develop exceptionally effective relationship with both pastoral and academic staff. They are able to develop their understanding of themselves, their community, the wider community and their place in it.
- Learners develop their independence and personal skills. They have increased self-confidence, self-awareness tolerance and acceptance of others' individuality. These skills will serve them well in their future lives.
- Residential learners consistently achieve higher academic results than those learners who are non-resident. This highlights the added value of a residential place at the college.
- Residential learners said that they feel valued by the staff at the college and appreciate the staff treating them as young adults.
- Due to the cross-campus consistency between pastoral and academic staff, learners are exceptionally well supported in all aspects of their lives. This enhances their success and future employability.
- Residential learners are supported in leading a healthy life style and making appropriate life-style choices. Discussions on sexual health and personal safety support them in keeping themselves and others safe.
- Residential learners develop a strong sense of community. They are very proud of their individual lodge accommodation and very supportive of the people they share these with.
- Residential learners speak very highly of the pastoral and academic teams. They report staff go 'above and beyond' for them. They say all staff, including senior management, are very approachable and 'really listen to what we have to say'.
- Residential learners spoken to loved their residential experience. They thoroughly enjoyed the vast range of activities that are on offer. They see these not only as fun but an opportunity to try new things.
- Residential learners develop skills in effective communication skills, tolerance and respect of others, team work and leadership. Encouraged by the staff's aspiration for their success, residential learners strive to reach their full potential and employability.

Quality of service	Outstanding
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- Outstanding pastoral arrangements ensure that residential learners receive effective support and resources to promote their personal and academic progress at the college. This is evidenced by their higher rate of success as compared with non-residential learners.
- Residential staff build effective relationship with residential learners. These are based on mutual trust and respect. The strength of relationship and the in-depth knowledge the residential staff

have of the students in their care are the foundations for the ongoing high quality care they deliver.

- Residential learners really appreciate the staff team treating them as young adults and respecting their privacy.
- Excellent guidance and support is provided for residential learners not only upon admission but also prior to this on interview days which include overnight stays. The subsequent induction process is very thorough and prepares residential learners well for their college experience. Residential learners say they found the induction programme very helpful especially the purposeful activities that enabled them to integrate easily into life at the college. This work is enhanced by the excellent informative literature the college supplies during the induction and throughout their time at college.
- The pastoral and academic teams work very closely to ensure residential learners receive all the support they require. Both staff teams are proactive in enabling residential learners to reach and, in some cases, exceed expectations and make excellent progress.
- Where required, detailed individualised support plans are developed for residential learners. These plans involve college staff, residential learners and their parents. This working together ensures the needs of residential learners are catered for in a holistic way.
- Due to the close working relationships between the pastoral and academic staff these teams are able to quickly identify any additional support a residential learner may need. This can be either academic support to achieve success or pastoral to enhance their development.
- Health care needs and the management of personal issues are exceptionally well met. The college team includes several in house counsellors, health advisors and speech and language therapists. In addition to this the college has built effective relationships with local additional support services to ensure residential learners receive all the support they need promptly.
- Residential learners have access to an exceptional range of extra-curricular and leisure activities. These are not only fun but also help them to develop their personal and social skills. Residential learners say they really enjoy these and get to take part in activities they have never tried before. They also report where there is additional cost for activities this is reasonable. Residential learners are encouraged to put forward ideas and plan activities for their peers to develop their organisational skills. The college is involved in a wide range of community and charity work. This enables residential learners to develop a sense of being a good citizen and effective member not only of their local but also their wider community.
- Consultation with residential learners is seen by the college as essential and part of the learners' development for their future lives. There are various forums for this. One of these is the role of lodge leaders. This role enables selected learners to develop their leadership, communication and representation skills. Lodge leaders report they are very clear on their role and proud of it. They see themselves as the voice of their lodge. Lodge leaders say this has proved a particularly effective system to bring about change as suggested by residential learners.
- Residential learners are provided with a high standard of accommodation. This is provided across several lodges for residential learners under 18 years old. Each lodge accommodates learners from different courses and of mixed gender. This promotes their interaction with a wider cohort of learners than just those on the same course. All have single en-suite rooms that they are able to personalise. Each lodge has a common room and kitchen area. In addition to these there is a spacious common room in which the pastoral team is situated. Students are very happy with the standard of accommodation available to them. All of the accommodation has a warm welcoming atmosphere.
- Security across the spacious campus is very well managed and discrete. These arrangements protect residential learners from potential intruders. Public access to some parts of the site is also well managed. This includes the college working closely with the local community so they can ensure the safety of the residential learners. The college staff have developed an effective working relationship with the local police which enhances this area of their work.

- Due to the nature of the courses the college offers residential learners may take part in early morning and late night duties. These duties are very well managed by the college and do not impose onerous demands on the learners. This view was supported by the learners who felt it was well balanced but did give them a realistic idea of what may be expected of them in their future careers.
- The catering provision at the college is outstanding. Residential learners are incredibly positive about this. They are provided with a well-balanced, nutritional and varied diet via a range of catering facilities. Those who take part in early morning or late duties particularly praised the college's provision of catering outlet on the sites where they are carrying out these duties. The college also provide a mobile food van. This range of provision means residential learners are able to access a very high standard of food when and where they need it. The catering team ensure all dietary needs are catered for whether these are linked to cultural or health needs.
- Residential learners are able to maintain contact with their family and friends by a variety of methods.
- Young people who are not on roll at the college do use the facilities outside of term time. This is very well managed. College staff support the adults that come with these young people but do not take sole responsibility for them.

Safeguarding	Outstanding
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- Safeguarding at the college is outstanding as learners safety is paramount and is effectively embedded throughout all aspects of the college. Policies and procedures are comprehensive and support this ethos. They are frequently reviewed and updated to reflect changes and developments, including those arising from research in this area. The policy reflects and addresses current national issues such as child sexual exploitation and the risk of radicalisation of learners. The college has strong effective links with fellow professionals in the safeguarding field. This multi-agency working enables the college to be at the forefront and be involved in driving practice in this area of the Further Education field as a whole. Joint working with the local police has led to them adopting some college strategies to disseminate to other education providers and community policing. The designated safeguarding officer at the college is the lead safeguarding person for the Further Education sector.
- All staff at the college receive an excellent level of training on all aspects of safeguarding. This was clearly demonstrated in interviews with members of staff. A significant number of the staff team have also undertaken higher level safeguarding training. This training is frequently refreshed to ensure staff knowledge and understanding of this area of work is kept up to date. Lodge leaders also receive safeguarding training to support them in their role.
- The college supports residential learners to develop their understanding of how to keep themselves safe. This includes work on personal and sexual safety, e-safety, sexual exploitation, female genital mutilation, radicalisation and many other forms of abuse.
- Robust systems are in place for countering bullying and harassment. The college undertakes a great deal of preventative work in this area which is linked to the education of learners and developing their understanding of how their actions can affect others. Residential learners do not see bullying as an issue at the college.
- The behaviour of residential learners observed throughout the inspection was excellent. This view is echoed by the Police Community Support Officer interviewed during the inspection. The main approach used for behaviour management is reflection and positive reinforcement. Learners say they like this approach as it develops their understanding and tolerance of others. This work enables learners to become responsible and effective members of the community in which they live.

- Residential learners say the rules at the college are minimal and based on good community living. They report that the few sanctions that are used are fair and proportional. Appropriate records are maintained in this area. These are regularly monitored to identify any trends or themes.
- The college is to be commended for the exceptional education and reflective work undertaken regarding the dangers of using drugs and alcohol. This is very effective resulting in a significantly low number of incidents. Learners say due to this approach and the staff's openness in discussion of these issues, they now 'really understand' the dangers that drugs and alcohol pose to them. This approach enhances learner growth and development.
- Recruitment and vetting procedures are excellent and robustly applied in practice. This ensures learners are protected from unsuitable adults.
- Health and safety systems at the college are robust and adhered to in practice which protect the learners. Risk assessments are comprehensive and frequently reviewed to ensure they reflect current situations or issues. Fire safety is well managed and supported by appropriate records.
- The supervision of learners is highly organised and appropriate for the age of the residential learners. The pastoral staff are situated in the main common room which places them at the heart of the residential provision. Learners say they always know how to contact staff, day and night, and that staff are very quick to respond. CCTV is in use on the college campus and residential learners are happy where cameras are placed. They do not consider this as an intrusion into their privacy but purely to keep them safe.
- A small number of residential learners are accommodated in lodgings arranged by the college and this is very well managed. There is a clear contract between the college and those providing lodgings. Initial and annual checks are carried to ensure the accommodation provided is of a good and safe standard. Those providing lodging are given information on safeguarding issues to ensure they have a good understanding of the college procedures and expectations in this area. The college has not recruited any new lodging providers for a significant number of years.
- All residential learners report that they feel very safe at the college.

The effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
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- Leadership and management of the college are outstanding. The leadership team is very strong and effective. They clearly demonstrate the passion and drive for providing the residential learners with an outstanding experience and being successful in their chosen field. The leadership team are committed to, not only the learners but also, the staff working at the college. As a result learners benefit from living and developing in a nurturing environment and receive holistic care from a dedicated staff team.
- The college has very clear and detailed statement of principles contained in a range of documents. These express the ethos and values of the college which are adhered to and embedded throughout the colleges practices, both pastoral and academic. They do truly reflect the practices observed throughout the inspection. The home from home guide is particularly noteworthy.
- The newly appointed residential manger is particularly impressive. Leaders, managers and the pastoral team truly have the learners' well-being and development at the heart of all they do. This approach means that the residential provision is given a very high profile at the college.
- There is exceptional consultation with learners at all levels in the college. Of note are the 'you said... we did' documents which provide learners with excellent feedback on points they have raised and what action the college has taken. Learners say they really value this because it

demonstrates that their views and ideas are taken seriously. One reported, 'even if they are not able to act on one of our suggestions it is fully explained to us why this has not been possible.'

- Residential learners receive excellent individualised support from a wide range of well-trained professionals. The whole team have really taken the ethos of the college ('every student counts') as the foundation of their work. This approach ensures learners receive what they need when they need it to ensure success.
- There are excellent induction and mentoring systems in place for new staff. New staff interviewed could not speak highly enough of these. They felt this prepared them well for the roles they undertake.
- Staff training has a very high profile at the college. Managers consider investing in the staff as investing in the learners. Staff undertake a substantial number of mandatory and additional training courses. These are kept under review and reflect the needs of the current learners.
- Staff support is very good. Staff interviewed were very positive about their managers and felt well supported for their individual roles. All staff have annual reviews where practice is discussed and any training needs are identified. This information is then incorporated into the annual training plans. Staff are also provided with a comprehensive staff hand book with an additional hand book for senior staff. These documents contain key policies and procedures as well as guidance on issues they may face. Staff said this was very helpful
- Throughout the inspection there was no evidence of discrimination. The senior leadership team, pastoral staff and the tutors are very vigilant in this area. Work is undertaken with learners in developing their confidence to raise any issues in this area either for themselves or on behalf of others.
- The staff are excellent at communicating with parents and carers. This ensures families are not only aware of any concerns but more importantly provided with information on the achievements of learners.
- The college has an excellent self-evaluation document. The rigor of this document means the college provides an accurate picture of its strengths and areas for development. This demonstrates the commitment for continual improvement.
- The college is seen as an integral part of the local community. The continual work in this area and that with external professionals and organisations ensure the college is seen as a prominent member in the field of Further Education.
- All National Minimum Standards are met with the vast majority being exceeded.

COLLEGE DETAILS

Type of college	Further education college residential provision
Age range of learners	16-18
Approximate number of learners in residence	79
Principal/CEO	Mr Mike Robbins
Date of previous inspection	17 November 2011
Website address	www.bridgwater.ac.uk

Purpose and Scope of 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 to assess the effectiveness of the service and to consider how well it complies with the relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the inspection framework and the evaluation schedule for the inspection of accommodation in further education colleges.

Contextual information

Bridgwater College comprises four separate campuses covering a wide geographical area. The main college is based in Bridgwater with small satellites in Yeovil and Paignton. Residential accommodation is found at the Cannington site. This site is the main centre for land-based courses, small animal care and the heritage gardens.

Residential accommodation for learners under 18 years of age at Cannington is based around five separate mixed sex lodges. The college also arranges host families for a small number of under 18 learners.

Each Lodge accommodates 10 learners. Each learner has a single bedroom with full en-suite facilities. There is a main common room for learners to access with a variety of recreational facilities. Each lodge also has a small communal lounge with galley kitchen facility. Learners under 18 are accommodated from Sunday to Friday each week and are required to return home each weekend and college break. The college also provides some flexi-boarding.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspectors

Wendy Anderson SCRI
Clare Davies SCRI

Two Social Care Regulatory Inspectors (SCRI), carried out the inspection with short notice. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors also used data on learners' achievements over the last three years to help them make judgements. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of learners and employers; these views are reflected throughout the report.

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Evaluation schedule for inspection of residential provision in further education colleges 2014*

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/evaluation-schedule-for-inspection-of-residential-provision-further-education-colleges>

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