

Loughborough College

Loughborough College of Further Education, Radmoor Road, Loughborough,
Leicestershire LE11 3BT

Inspection of residential provision

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this further education college with residential accommodation

This is a further education college located in Leicestershire. The college offers a range of courses, including further education, higher education, apprenticeships and professional qualifications. The college provides residential provision on the college campus, with single and shared accommodation regardless of gender. Young people under 18 are accommodated separately to those who are 18 or over. Young people have en suite single rooms arranged in flats of five or six bedrooms. Each flat has its own kitchen area to enable young people to cook their own meals. Some young people stay in 'homestay' accommodation, which is organised and monitored by the accommodation team.

Inspection dates 16 to 18 January 2018

Overall experiences and progress of young people, taking in account good

How well young people are helped and protected good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers good

The college provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Date of last inspection: 20 May 2015

Key findings from this inspection

This college is good because:

- Young people say that they enjoy living in the residential provision at this college. They receive the help and support they need to settle into residential life.
- Induction processes are thorough and provide young people with the information they need.
- The academic progress made by residential students exceeds the progress made by students attending the main campus.
- Young people benefit from a good range of effective support services, including mentors who meet with young people and provide them with care and support.
- Staff respect and value the individuality and diversity of young people. The college has developed a role for a manager, in conjunction with a governor, for equality and diversity in order to promote tolerance and understanding.
- Staff understand the need to prioritise the welfare and safety of young people and know what action to take should they have any worries or concerns for young people's safety.
- The behaviour of young people is generally good, but staff will take action in line with disciplinary procedures if behaviour becomes unacceptable. The college has no issues currently with alcohol or drugs and the residential areas are settled.
- College staff designated as safeguarding leads are knowledgeable and have a very good understanding of safeguarding and child protection. They have developed effective links with partner agencies and can quickly identify agencies that can provide the support and care young people need.
- The leaders of the college understand the risks to young people of recruiting unsuitable adults to work with them. They ensure strict adherence to safer recruitment processes to minimise any risk to young people. The college benefits from strong and effective leadership. Governance is aspirational and highly effective. Governors demonstrate determination to drive forward improvements for the benefit of young people.
- Staff are enthusiastic and report good support from managers. This leads to a very motivated workforce providing care and support to young people.

The college's areas for development:

- Staff working in residence should have regular reviews of their boarding practice through one-to-one meetings with their manager. This will provide them with the oversight and guidance they need to provide the best possible support for young people.
- The college needs to ensure that host families understand the processes for reporting any concerns they may have regarding young people. Additionally, managers supporting host families should engage with the families regularly regarding their

experiences, ideas and views regarding caring for young people.

- In February 2018, the college will be implementing a more rigorous system to ensure that the whereabouts of all young people is known. This is in relation to fire safety. The current system is in need of improvement.
- Young people's views are important. Currently, young people complete surveys regarding their experiences of living in residence. The college leadership could consider strengthening this further with the development of a forum or meeting with young people so that they can provide their opinions and ideas in addition to the surveys.
- The college leadership may wish to consider the overall management structure. Developing a governor role with specific responsibility for residence may provide a greater focus on the residential provision within the overall college.

What does the college need to do to improve?

Recommendations

- ensure that young people are provided with education and support to understand the importance of safe and hygienic food storage. Additionally, residential staff should ensure that food is stored safely in fridges, freezers and other food storage areas so that it is safe for use.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of young people: good

Young people benefit from and enjoy living in the residential accommodation provided by the college. During the course of this inspection, they were consistently positive about life on campus; one young person said it was 'perfect', while another said it was like 'being at home'. Young people feel supported and helped by the residential staff, whom they feel able to talk to about any matters that affect them and might be preventing them from settling and making progress. This support from the staff means that young people can quickly settle into residential life at this college and make progress.

Young people new to college residence benefit from a good induction that prepares them for residential and college life. This induction begins before their arrival on campus, and they are given a comprehensive range of information and materials that help and prepare them. Young people receive a good introduction when they arrive and staff help them to make friends quickly with others, because staff understand how daunting it can be to move away from home, often for the first time. This helps young people to overcome their initial anxieties so that they are ready and prepared for learning.

Residential students make good academic progress. This progress is better than that made by non-residential students. Progress is good because residential students have opportunities to access college resources at more flexible times. They remain focused on their future and want to make progress, and receive good support from staff across the college campus. Those who require it receive additional support and help, whether academic or practical, from college mentors and support staff. In addition to this, the college has a range of support services that students can access in relation to any aspect of their care and educational needs. For example, one young person was struggling to sleep because of worries over workload and exam pressures. Staff recognised this and provided the help and support the young person needed. The young person's parent valued and praised this help and support provided by staff.

The individuality and diversity needs of young people are valued and respected. The college has recently appointed an equality and diversity manager who works effectively with the governor responsible for this area to promote understanding, tolerance and promotion of all aspects of identity and individuality across the college. Young people

who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender receive a good level of support should they require it. The needs of young people from all faith groups are promoted and this means that young people from diverse groups in society benefit from very good individual support, respect and help to be who they are.

Some young people benefit from staying with host families. The families receive the help and support they require from a designated manager at the college who ensures that these families comply with the requirements for host families. Young people greatly value the care and support they receive from the families and they develop lasting bonds and friendships. Areas for development with host families include the college providing host families with guidance on how to report any worries they may have about young people and for the manager with responsibility for these families to undertake more reflective discussions with them about their experiences, ideas and views regarding the young people for whom they are providing care.

Young people's views on living in residence are obtained through surveys; this approach is good but could be made stronger. A number of young people spoken to during this inspection said that they would like to have the opportunity to meet with residential staff to give their views, ideas and opinions about residence. This would provide the opportunity to have wider discussions about issues affecting their lives.

How well young people are helped and protected: good

Staff prioritise the safety and welfare of all young people in residence. Staff understand young people's vulnerabilities and give priority to those about whom they have specific concerns. Residential managers carefully scrutinise all applications and information provided by young people's families. Should any concerns emerge, they will liaise with partner agencies and families to ensure that they can provide the right level of care and support or ensure that a specialist agency is involved to provide the care and support that the young person will need.

The behaviour of young people is generally good. When behaviour becomes unacceptable, the college uses disciplinary procedures in a fair and proportionate manner. Concerns about alcohol and drug use are rare. The staff generally know young people's whereabouts and there are strict time curfews in place. The staff will check where young people are and will take action if their whereabouts is unknown, in line with their missing person policy. The residential managers and staff are conscientious, take their safeguarding responsibilities seriously, and will take effective action to protect young people as any good parent would.

Staff designated as safeguarding leads for the college understand their roles well. They understand what constitutes risk to young people. They have developed excellent relationships with partner agencies, including the Local Safeguarding Children Board. This means that they take quick and effective action when concerns arise. This helps to keep young people safe.

The risk to young people from those caring for them is minimised through safe and

robust recruitment processes. Potential new staff undergo rigorous vetting, including past employment checks, with any gaps in employment accounted for satisfactorily. Reference, identity and criminal records checks are carried out to protect young people. The recruiting managers have completed safer recruitment training, providing them with the insight and knowledge they need to ensure that they do not recruit unsuitable individuals.

Young people enjoy each other's company and make good and strong friendships. Bullying and intimidation are not concerns. Young people spoken to during the inspection said they got along well and would not tolerate bullying of any kind. Young people demonstrated compassion for their friends, understanding how difficult it can be to settle into life in residence.

A recommendation from this inspection is for more work to be done with young people, supplemented by robust checks, to ensure that food is stored safely. The young people all cook for themselves and store their food in fridges, freezers and cupboards. The staff must ensure that storage is in line with food safety guidelines and work with young people to ensure that they understand what constitutes safe food storage. This should be backed-up with daily checks by staff to avoid any potential problems.

The college is implementing a new system to monitor the whereabouts of students and visitors in the residential areas. This will be an added safeguard in relation to fire and emergency safety precautions. The current signing-in and -out system is ineffective at monitoring the movement of students and visitors.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The college benefits from strong leadership. A new chief executive officer recently took up his role and is well supported by a team of vice principals. All have a shared ambition to make the residential experience for young people as good as it possibly can be. Highly motivated and aspirational governors share this ambition. Governors know what takes place in college and are visible and accessible. The college may consider establishing a governor with responsibility for the residential provision and a restructure of management arrangements in due course to provide a greater focus for the residential provision.

The college is recruiting permanent wardens and reducing casual staffing. This will provide greater consistency of staffing in residential areas and stability of staffing. Young people will benefit from knowing the staff and being certain about the staffing arrangements. Staff are positive and enjoy their work and they receive developmental reviews to ensure that they are receiving the training and development they need to provide good care and support to young people. However, they do not receive regular individual meetings with their manager to review the college's boarding practice. This would provide them with the opportunity to discuss any issues or concerns they may have or reflect upon practice and what might make it better. This is an area for further development.

Staff communication in the residential provision is very good. Staff handovers take place daily and provide staff coming onto shift with the information they need to provide good and safe care for young people. Good, detailed written information supports the verbal information exchange. The manager who oversees this process intervenes if information is missing, is unclear or could be improved. This good process for communication extends to the wider college, and tutors, mentors and support staff all receive the information they need from the residential staff to enable them to provide support to young people.

Complaints are rare. However, managers take any complaints very seriously, investigate them thoroughly and seek to resolve them to the satisfaction of all concerned and in line with the college complaints procedure. Managers are keen to learn lessons from complaints.

The residential provision is very well organised. Managers and staff understand their respective roles and responsibilities. Staff understand who to report to and who to seek guidance from if in any doubt. This good communication across the campus is a significant factor in helping this residential provision remain highly organised and focused on supporting young people. This extends to tutors and academic staff and there is good partnership between academic staff and residential staff, which helps young people. This college understands that, fundamentally, residential students require both care and support to realise and achieve their full academic potential.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of young people. They watched how professional staff work with young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the college knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

Using the 'Social care common inspection framework', this inspection was carried out under the Children Act 1989 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, and to consider how well it complies with the national minimum standards.

Further education college with residential accommodation details

Social care unique reference number: SC043659

Principal/CEO: Mr John Doherty

Inspectors

Phillip Morris, social care inspector

Joanne Vyas, social care inspector

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