

Askham Bryan College

Inspection report for Further Education College

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Inspector	Lynne Busby / Monica Hargreaves
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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 outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and the relevant National Minimum Standards for the service.

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

Askham Bryan College is situated approximately four miles outside of the city of York and is set in spacious grounds. The college offers a range of further and higher education courses, predominantly related to the land based industries, including animal care, horticultural and agricultural studies and engineering. The college has four additional non-residential centres located across North Yorkshire. Term time accommodation is provided on the York site for students aged 16 to 18 years of age, in addition to separate accommodation for students who are over 18 years old and are in further or higher education. Accommodation is situated in hostel blocks within the grounds. Each student has their own study bedroom, and some accommodation offers en suite bathroom facilities. The college provides a range of student support services, including a dedicated team of wardens who supervise residential students. Askham Bryan does not arrange off-site lodgings for students.

Summary

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

This was an announced inspection to look at how the college promotes and safeguards the welfare of residential students under 18 years. An assessment was undertaken of how the college has implemented the recommendation made at the last inspection.

Since the previous inspection the college has a new principal and has had a number of changes to enrich the student experience. The college staff ensure that health needs are fully met and students are encouraged to make healthy life style choices. Safeguarding matters are managed well and students say there is very little bullying. Students are supported by a range of people who have a good understanding of individual needs. There are well motivated and committed staff who are student focused.

Improvements since the last inspection

The college was asked to ensure staff with responsibility for the supervision of residential students have knowledge of welfare practices and policies which is consolidated by training and supervision. There is clear written information in the residential handbook and a range of training opportunities available to equip staff for the role. The staff have regular appraisals. This ensures that staff are supported in practice and training is identified and delivered.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Students health is given high priority and the college has developed sound processes to ensure that students are well supported if they have health or personal problems. There are a number of people they can approach if they have a problem, such as the dedicated pastoral team, wardens, student ambassadors and student support staff. There is also written information and posters around the college with useful contact numbers about services outside the college who they may approach.

Medical information is sought at enrolment to identify any special medical or personal needs of each student and consents for emergency treatment are sought. The college has ensured that health professionals are available for students who wish to access them. There is an independent counsellor available to students through student services.

There is a partnership arrangement with the local medical practice and students can make their own appointments. This gives them an opportunity for private consultation and male and female doctors are available. There is a sexual health nurse who holds regular clinics for advice and support. Within the tutorial sessions, alcohol, drugs and smoking are discussed, and the college is effective in responding to any incidents of substance misuse or underage drinking.

Staff have received first aid training to ensure minor illnesses and injuries can be addressed. There are excellent procedures for recording any accidents and injuries which are rigorously monitored.

The college makes excellent arrangements to ensure that students are well nourished. Students are encouraged to make healthy lifestyle choices and incentives are in place to eat healthily. Meals are freshly prepared and served in the refectory. The meal times were observed to be pleasant social occasions with students eating together and there is no unnecessary queuing time. Students have an opportunity to give their view on the food and the catering manager attends the college council. Within the hostels students have access to kitchens which are appropriately equipped to allow students to make snacks, such as toast and drinks. Students say they like preparing their own meals as it makes them more independent.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

There is an appropriate policy on anti-bullying and the staff take a zero tolerance approach, encouraging students to discuss any concerns they have. Students say there is little bullying and have confidence that staff would intervene if necessary. Any problems which occur would be dealt with through the colleges discipline

process if necessary.

Safeguarding matters are managed very well. The college has a clear safeguarding procedure that is understood by staff and followed in practice. There is a designated senior staff member for child protection who has made links with various local authority designated officers as the college take students from a number of areas and the Local Safeguarding Children Board. Staff across the campus are trained in safeguarding issues and manage concerns appropriately to protect students. Records indicate that the staff respond promptly to any concerns. Students say they feel safe in the college. Of note is the introduction of a safeguarding telephone line which students can ring if they have any concerns.

Complaints practice is very well managed. There is a clear procedure and students are given information about how to make a formal complaint. Students are clear about how to make a complaint and said, 'If I had a problem, I'd see staff'. Complaints are recorded and demonstrate that they are taken seriously and have been addressed without delay. All complaints are analysed by senior college staff to consider patterns and trends and to ensure that there has been an appropriate resolution.

The college has a clear disciplinary process that is made known to students and their parents and that is applied fairly. Students confirm that they understand the college's disciplinary process. They are given clear written information about the college rules, their own responsibilities and the potential sanctions for breaking rules. Students spoken with generally think that the college rules are 'okay'.

The privacy of students is respected and students have their own room which they can lock. Students say that staff knock on doors before they enter but do not all wait for reply before entering. However, some students said this has now improved. Students understand that staff do room checks and that their rooms might be searched 'if there is a good reason'. Students are present if searches take place. All records are securely stored and staff are aware to keep information confidential.

Students live in a safe and well maintained environment. The arrangements for protecting students from the risk of fire are extremely well managed. The health and safety advisor is qualified and trained and has developed a personal evacuation planning policy for the college. Risk assessments have been undertaken and evacuation plans have been developed. Each hostel has a detailed fire risk assessment. All risk assessments are reviewed and kept up to date.

Students are protected by the college's robust system for checking staff and visitors. Staff are recruited and appointed through an equal opportunities procedure. Staff undertaking the checks have up-to-date training on employment law which is excellent practice.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

There are very good arrangements to ensure students receive individualised personal support. This includes support to students who have a range of different needs. Staff demonstrate an excellent understanding of the individual needs of students and a commitment to ensuring that they get the best from their college experience. There are many staff from whom students may gain support. These include personal tutors, a counselling service, chaplaincy, connexions and student support staff. The introduction of dedicated pastoral tutors has been well received and students have a named person they can go to if they have any problems or need support. This ensures any personal, welfare and pastoral concerns are treated sensitively, confidentially and managed well for the students benefit.

Students do not experience inappropriate discrimination. Staff work hard to level the playing field for disadvantaged students and 'go the extra mile' to ensure that all students enjoy equality of access to all that the college has to offer. Students say that the staff are good at 'helping them fit in', 'treating students as an adult' and 'treat everyone fairly'.

There is a new student enrichment worker who works closely with staff and the student union to provide activities for students. A calendar of events is produced with information for students on all planned activities. Students spoke positively about the variety of activities including going to the cinema, shopping, paintballing, ice skating and the summer ball. Students have access to large grounds and to areas in the college where they can take part in activities such as football, rugby, netball and archery.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The college makes frequent opportunities available to students to encourage them to give their views on the college generally, including on issues relating to pastoral care and staying in hostels. Systems include students surveys, student council meetings and individual and group discussions with the wardens. There is good evidence to confirm that action has been taken on issues raised. However, in discussion, some students commented that they did not think their views counted and that they did not feel they were always listened to.

Students confirmed they can keep in touch with parents and many have mobile phones and there are pay phones on the campus. Students also said that they can use the phone in the student support office if necessary. Parents can visit the college and are actively encouraged to attend interviews, taster days and information sessions. Where appropriate, parents are informed of any major welfare concerns.

Students confirm that they are given good information about the college when they arrive. There are sound arrangements in place to introduce them to life at college and living in the hostels and students confirm that the induction week is helpful in enabling them to get to know their way about the college and meeting new students. Students are given support and guidance when they leave the college through their pastoral tutors, course tutors and student support services.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

The college's organisation of residential provision safeguards students' welfare. Wardens regularly 'patrol' the buildings throughout the evening and into the early morning. The accommodation is provided in large newer blocks and small older blocks. These mainly are separated into male and female blocks, with one block accommodating males and females on separate corridors. The smaller hostels have communal shower and toilet facilities and the newer hostels have en suite facilities. There are appropriate arrangements made for those students who have additional needs, including adapted bathroom and toilet facilities. Students spoken to were generally happy with the hostels.

Students are not allowed into each others blocks but can meet in the kitchens areas. There are areas in the college where students can meet both indoors and outdoors. There is a common room which is centrally located and equipped with pool table and games. However, students said that this was small for the number of students who use it. The senior management team reviews accommodation regularly to ensure all groups have communal space.

There are excellent arrangements made to ensure that students are appropriately supported and protected when they are off site on all approved trips. There are comprehensive risk assessments in place and there are contingency plans to address any concerns.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

There is clear information available that includes the college's statement of principles. This is available to students, parents and other stakeholders and covers the focus of the college and the service students can expect.

Risk assessments and college record keeping is exceptionally well managed. Risk assessments are thorough and are regularly monitored by senior managers in the college. Updates and reports are presented to the health and safety committee which is part of the wider governors meetings. This ensures that the welfare of students is

regularly monitored.

There is a strong senior management team who are supported by a governing body to drive improvements which safeguard students and ensure their experience is positive. The college is very student centred and staff are capable, experienced, enthusiastic and supervise the students during the day and in their free time to ensure their safety. Students confirm that they know who is on duty and they can contact them easily. Any trips which are arranged off site are risk assessed and well organised to ensure students safety.

The staff employed to work with the students have an induction and training which gives them the skills and knowledge to work with the students who are resident. There are good policies and guidance which is kept under review and is known by staff, this helps ensure that students are well looked after during their time at the college. There is a staff handbook which includes the colleges approach to safeguarding. Although staff could state what they would do if a student was absent this was not recorded within the guidance and did not fully inform all staff of the process to follow.

The risk assessments, sanctions, complaints and accidents are regularly monitored by designated staff and any concentration or trends are monitored and action is taken to reduce risks.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. Staff display a good insight and awareness of equality and diversity and the promotion of individual needs is an intrinsic part of their practice. The college is very inclusive and provides opportunities for all students to participate in activities both within the college and the wider community. Students are encouraged to learn about other religions and cultures and the ethos of the college is for students to respect the rights of others. Many students are very positive about their experience at the college saying 'it's mint', 'great college' and 'makes us and others feel welcome'.

What must be done to secure future improvement?

Recommendations

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

- review how action taken following students' consultations is fed back (NMS 12.3)
- ensure that staff guidance includes the monitoring of and required response to absences. (NMS 31.4)