

Wiltshire College - Lackham

Inspection report for Further Education College

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Inspector	Debbi Flint
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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

Wiltshire College was founded in November 2000 when colleges in Chippenham, Trowbridge and Lackham merged. In January 2008 Salisbury College also joined the merger and was incorporated into Wiltshire College. The college in Lackham, which became part of Wiltshire College in November 2000, was originally founded in 1946 as a agricultural college and operated as an agricultural college prior to the merger. It has a working farm which allows students hands-on experience of the rural economy and it also hosts a Museum of Rural and Agricultural Life. Lackham today, as part of Wiltshire College, offers traditional land-based courses as well as an expanding range of further education and higher education courses in areas such as animal care, horticulture and motor sport. The Lackham campus provides accommodation to 54 students under 18 years of age and these students are the focus of this inspection.

Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

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

At this announced inspection all key standards were inspected and the recommendations from the previous inspection were followed up.

Strong leadership and clear management of residential provision are provided by the head warden and other key members of the pastoral team. Students under 18 years of age who are accommodated are offered a high level of support from a wide range of professionals. They are also encouraged to participate in every aspect of college life and clearly feel at home within the Lackham campus. Students are exceptionally well behaved; they state that they are proud to belong to this community and they believe that the rules are fair. The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding throughout all the standards inspected. Staff at Lackham work hard to ensure that students' individual needs are met and those students who have additional needs are particularly well-supported.

Some improvements are required at this inspection and these required improvements are mainly environmental. Some of the student accommodation is below standard. This specifically relates to the showers, decoration, one faulty lock and the hostel kitchens.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection three recommendations were made and these were: to ensure that students have a comprehensive health plan where required; to ensure that staff files contain all the required information and to ensure the college chaplain receives

updates to the child protection policies and procedures. The first two recommendations have been met and the last recommendation is no longer applicable as the college chaplain no longer visits the site.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Students' health is promoted by a caring and supportive staff team and staff work hard to ensure that students' health needs are met. All wardens are qualified in first aid and there is also a designated warden who oversees the college's health care provision. She works with a wide range of other staff and health care professionals in order to ensure that students' health needs are well-managed. Prior to admission to the college students complete a health form and residential joining booklet. They detail any individual health needs as well as an emergency contact number and next-of-kin information. The college's residential joining booklet contains the college's policy on the storage and administration of medication which students are required to sign up to. Students are required to self-administer their own medication unless exceptional circumstances prevent this. On arrival at the college students register with a local doctor and once in residence if they need to see a doctor they contact the designated warden for health. The warden arranges doctors' appointments and ensures students are transported to the doctor. If students are ill and need to stay in their rooms the warden checks on them at least twice daily and ensures that their parents are aware of their illness. Students state that the warden 'is very caring and always visits us when we are ill'. She also ensures that illness and accident records are completed in order to ensure that the college has a record of any medical incident. Residential care plans are in place for students with medical problems or any additional needs and these are followed in practice. One parent wrote, 'Very impressed with the initial interview with a warden on arrival regarding son's health needs and his and the college's expectations and responsibilities.'

Students' health needs are supported by the provision of a counselling service and a range of other free services which include advice on sexual health matters and the dangers of substance abuse. All wardens have received 'No Worries' training in sexual health and 'Frank's Friends' training around the dangers of substance abuse. In addition to this the community campus team organises health promotion programmes as part of the community campus programme.

Students benefit from the provision of a clean and comfortable dining facility which overlooks the college grounds. Meals are pleasant and leisurely occasions and the college offers a good variety of healthy and nutritious food. At lunchtime there are two main courses plus a third vegetarian option. Sandwiches and a salad bar are also available and the college provides special diets for those students with additional needs. Staff are also trained in the use of an epi-pen so that they could respond effectively to any incident of anaphylaxis. The college has a café where students can purchase additional snacks and there are also kitchens in all of the student hostels. However, the kitchens in the student hostels are very basic and there are large uncovered bins near food preparation areas.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Students' safety and well-being is promoted by a caring and vigilant staff team which has a great deal of professional expertise. The college has a designated person for safeguarding and there is also a designated governor with responsibility for child and vulnerable adult protection. Policies are issued to all staff detailing student protection procedures and there are also welfare concern sheets which staff can complete if they have any safeguarding concerns. The designated person is a member of the Local Safeguarding Children Board and she has received extensive training in student protection. She ensures that all staff receive an induction in safeguarding and complete an on-line training package. Staff can also attend safeguarding workshops. There has been one safeguarding referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) since the last inspection and this was dealt with appropriately. A small number of bullying incidents have been reported to staff and these have all been handled appropriately. Students receive advice on bullying and they are clear that incidents of bullying are very low. One student said, 'Bullying is something that happens at school. We are all adults here. And bullying would simply not be allowed anyway.' Students also state that they know how to complain. However they unanimously state that they have no major complaints.

The college has a code of conduct which is published in the student handbook. This clearly states what misconduct is and the procedures that will be followed if the code of conduct is breached. Students are generally exceptionally well-behaved and disciplinary actions are infrequent. Detailed disciplinary records are kept and these are monitored by the head warden.

The college employs a health and safety manager who oversees health and safety across the campus. Fire risk assessments were drawn up in 2004 and these are currently in the process of being reviewed by an external consultancy. Fire drills take place each term and all fire equipment is regularly inspected. All wardens are fire marshals and there are also other fire marshals in designated zones across the campus. All activities taking place on-site have been risk assessed and there are also risk assessments in place for every aspect of the environment and any off-site trips. The college has a clear and appropriate policy on access to college premises by people from outside the college and this is implemented in practice. All visitors sign in to the college and are kept under supervision. CCTV cameras are used on-site and the premises are generally very secure with the exception of one lock which was found to be faulty. The college ensures that there is careful selection and vetting of all staff and volunteers working with students and recruitment records are robust.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

The college has its own farm which includes 170 dairy cows, 450 ewes, a deer park, crops and an organic area of farming land. Some students work on the farm as part of their curriculum but other students who may be studying something different, such as horticulture or motor sport, are also able to benefit from visiting the farm. Staff and students state that the college is very much a community and there is a community campus programme which enables students to get involved in events, trips, training, workshops, displays, presentations and exhibitions. Students also get involved, where appropriate, in the maintenance of communal facilities as part of their curriculum and they have been involved in fencing, stonewall work, paving and gardening. The college has a large sports hall and fitness centre which some students use for their curriculum and which all students can use for leisure purposes. In the early evenings staff organise regular minibus trips to the nearest supermarket and also to Swindon so that students can ice skate, go bowling or visit the cinema. Later in the evening the college's own social centre, the Avon Centre, opens. This centre is very popular with students as a place to meet and socialise. It does have a bar but staff have robust procedures in place to ensure that students under 18 years do not purchase any alcohol.

Staff at the college strongly recognise the importance of ensuring that students can access a wide variety of professionals and other individuals for support. The college has an on-site counsellor based at the Lackham campus, although students can take advantage of counselling services at the other campuses if they wish. Residential students can also discuss any problems with their wardens and they highly praise the warden team. They say the wardens 'look out for us' and they feel able to approach them about any issue. One student states, 'They are not really like wardens. They are like friends or family and you can really trust them.' All students have an individual personal tutor with whom they have regular tutorials. Tutors use a 'learner at risk tracker' to highlight any concerns they may have about individual students. This ensures all staff are aware of any student's difficulties and these can be discussed at campus support meetings and action plans developed. The college's strong and robust systems enable staff to give very good support to students with additional needs and one parent wrote, 'Lackham has been 100% supportive and sensible. He is treated as far as health and safety permits, exactly the same as other students, and because of this he feels accepted, whilst knowing that he will be listened-to if he is unwell or has any other needs.' The college's principal has indicated that she is quite happy to be emailed direct by students at any time about any issues that may concern them and some students state that they have taken advantage of the principal's availability and have contacted her to discuss issues. Students are also able to arrange an appointment with a chaplain at the local church. There is no longer an on-site chaplaincy facility due to changes in funding.

The college strongly promotes a positive attitude to diversity and respecting the rights of all individuals regardless of gender, marital status, age, disability, race, religion, sexual orientation or position within the college. A statement declaring the

importance of this is on the college's website and the college also ensures that all staff receive training in equality and diversity. The student handbook also contains very good information on diversity including the college's diversity and inclusivity code of practice and the college policy on disability. The college ensures that students with additional needs are supported through a wide range of mediums and practices including an evening workshop which is held regularly on Tuesdays. Curriculum related off-site residential trips include an annual visit to Holland and an annual international study tour in South Africa.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

The college offers a residential taster programme for prospective students which is held during the Easter holidays. All new full time further education (FE) students have a three day induction. Residential students have a longer induction which incorporates an orientation to a weekend in residence. All new residential students are issued with a welcome pack which contains information about the warden team and how to register with the college doctor. Following admission, students are able to keep in touch with their family and friends through the use of mobile telephones, college pay telephones, and email or web cam.

Students are enabled to contribute to the operation of residential provision through course forums, focus groups and a student council on each campus. There is an executive committee which comprises of nine students from the student councils on each campus. There is also a student union. Students can also contribute through discussing issues with tutor wardens who will take these issues to the wardens' meetings. There are also hostel meetings where students can discuss issues with wardens and the assistant wardens. In addition to this the college appoints student wardens who are over 18 years of age to provide a bridge between the students and full time wardens and to ensure that all students can have a voice through being able to report issues to a peer who is slightly older than themselves.

The college employs a careers guidance and education manager with whom students can arrange one-to-one appointments. She advises students on careers, university applications, funding for study and transition. She also organises events such as a Higher Education fair every October and an additional careers fair. She states that she is currently planning a Higher Education and Employability conference for later this year.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is satisfactory.

The college accommodates 54 students on the Lackham campus who are under the age of 18 years. These students reside in nine of the Lackham campus's residential hostels. Student accommodation is appropriately lit, heated, ventilated and suitably furnished. All student rooms are single rooms and they are large and spacious.

However, some rooms are in need of redecoration. Residential areas have common rooms which are used for recreational purposes. One residential area is also in need of redecoration. All student hostels have baths and showers but the showers are in very poor condition. The bases are stained and dirty and have mould around the edges and the cubicles have a curtain rather than a door; this means that they do not adequately ensure the privacy and the dignity of the students who use them.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The college outlines its statement of principles and practice in a number of guidelines. These include a residential accommodation service information sheet; occupancy terms and conditions which accompany the application pack; financial agreements; a welcome pack and the comprehensive student handbook. The college is efficiently managed by the principal and governing body. The Lackham campus is managed by a team of professional staff which include the head warden; the health and safety manager; the director of student support and engagement and the vice principal. The health and safety manager monitors all accidents and risk assessments and the head warden monitors residential complaints and sanctions. The number of accidents is low, bearing in mind the amount of high risk activities that take place in the college. Complaints and disciplinary incidents are also low in number.

The college ensures that there are sufficient staff deployed in all residential areas. There are four wardens on duty each evening. If there are any high risk activities scheduled to take place an additional duty manager remains on stand-by. All wardens receive an induction which includes basic student protection training and are issued with a comprehensive wardens' handbook which contains job descriptions and all key policies. Staff go on to complete other relevant training such as 'No Worries' sexual health training; 'Frank's Friends' drug and alcohol training; 'True Vision' training around hate crime; 'Zone Phone' training around ChildLine; fire marshal training; and equality and diversity training. Cleaning staff confirm that they have received student protection and health and safety training. They have also completed the National Vocational Qualification at level 2 in cleaning. All staff state that they feel well-supported and receive regular supervision and appraisals. A high proportion of staff have worked at the college for many years.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. Staff go to great lengths to ensure that the individual needs of every student are met and the college is particularly supportive of students with additional needs. Equality and diversity has a high profile within the college and is discussed in detail in the students' handbook. This means that students are very much aware that no form of discrimination will be tolerated.

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):

- ensure that drinks and snacks can be prepared hygienically in hostel kitchens; in particular ensure all large waste bins near kitchen work surfaces are covered and consider refurbishing hostel kitchens (breach of NMS 23.4).
- ensure one faulty lock is repaired (breach of NMS 37.4)
- replace or renovate all showers in the student hostels (breach of NMS 40.3)
- redecorate residential accommodation in particular the residential TV room and student bedrooms in Stonehenge (breach of NMS 36.1)