

# Boston College

Inspection report for Further Education College

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<b>Nominated person</b>	Sue Daley
<b>Date of last inspection</b>	22/01/2008

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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**

Boston Further Education College is situated close to the town centre of Boston on the east coast of Lincolnshire. It is a market town with a range of amenities and rail links to Lincoln, Nottingham, Cambridge and London.

The college has 1659 full-time learners aged between 16 and 19. There are approximately 84 international learners from Europe and Asia, and approximately 43 learners are under the age of 18. Learners can choose to live in the halls of residence or stay with local families vetted by the college. There are around 25 home stay families approved. The halls of residence are made up of 20 flats with between two and 10 study bedrooms in each. All flats have free internet access. Kitchen and bathroom facilities are shared. Learners can choose to be either self-catering, or eat meals in the college. A warden lives in a flat in the halls of residence. A majority of the learners contributed to this inspection.

### **Summary**

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

This was a full announced inspection that concentrated on key national minimum standards for accommodation of learners under the age of 18 by Further Education Colleges. The inspection focused on areas relating to being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution, achieving economic wellbeing and how staffing and management arrangements support the operation of the college.

The overall judgement for Boston College is outstanding. Learners are provided with outstanding support from a professional and conscientious team of staff. The college's core values are promoted well in practice, which means that all learners are treated fairly and equally. Learners feel safe on all college campuses and this adds value to their learning and residential experiences. College managers provide supportive and effective leadership which results in staff being clearly focused and guided in the support they provide to learners. One recommendation has been raised as a result of this inspection but has a low impact on the learners.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

The college has taken action to address the two recommendations made at the last inspection in 2008. Improvements have been made to the learners compliance with fire precautions and risk assessments are in place when children are accommodated with younger adults.

## **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is outstanding.

Learner's good health and wellbeing is actively promoted by a range of competent and professional staff. There are many health related benefits that learners gain because of the way in which services are organised and delivered. In particular, learners gain valuable information through their induction into college life that helps them know about available services and how to stay fit and healthy. This good start is reinforced and consolidated by a range of ongoing educational activities that encourage a greater awareness of how to prevent illness and poor health. Learners have access to a health advisor and clinics are held twice a week to support any learner who is seeking advice on any health issues.

Learners' day-to-day health and wellbeing is effectively promoted because there is a dedicated learners' services department which offers extensive internal and external support mechanisms for learners to help support physical, emotional and social wellbeing. A confidential counselling service is available to learners who may have personal or emotional difficulties. These arrangements help ensure effective and timely support for learners whilst keeping sensitive issues private and confidential. Staff are well equipped to respond to accidents and unforeseen medical needs because they have been trained in the use of first aid. The college takes a firm stance regarding the use of alcohol and under age drinking.

Learners have widely differing views on the standard of food provided. Learners have a variety of choices for each of the three meals that are provided each day. There is clear evidence of a variety of healthy options and salads are always on the menu. The catering manager explained that the canteen has to respond to learner demand, but there are always healthy options provided daily as well as the less healthy of chips, sausages and burgers. Any special diets are readily catered for. Learners have ready access to drinking water and snacks at reasonable times. Resident learners have facilities within their accommodation to prepare drinks and hot food.

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

The provision is outstanding.

The college has an outstanding focus on safeguarding and protection with clear operational policies and procedures that are communicated effectively to promote the safety and welfare of all learners. The college has a designated team for safeguarding and the strong leadership consistently promotes an environment where safety is important. Learners say they feel safe with comments like: 'I always feel safe at the college' and 'there's always someone I can talk to'.

The college has, and follows, an appropriate policy on protection of learners from abuse, and response to allegations, which is consistent with the Local Safeguarding Children Board. There is an ongoing programme of safeguarding training for all staff including ancillary with the exception of the security guards. However, training has

been identified for all the security guards in the very near future. These arrangements ensure that staff are aware of what action to take if they have concern or need to report a safeguarding matter.

Learners' privacy and confidentiality is promoted and respected. There are a number of policies that underpin and guide staff practice in this area. Learners expressed the view that personal information about them is kept safe and that staff work in a way that keeps personal matters confidential. Learners and parents are provided with information in an appropriate format about how to make a complaint. Most learners are clear on how to raise a concern and say that staff listen to them if they have a complaint or are unhappy about anything.

Learners are encouraged and supported to behave well and generally learners' behaviour is very good. This is because the college provides learning and living environments that are based on well promoted core values that in practical terms support positive relationships and academic success. There is very little bullying at the college which is not tolerated. Staff practice regarding learner discipline is fair and consistent which matches learner feedback that staff are 'reasonable'. The college has clear and appropriate policies and guidelines relating to behaviour and discipline. The staff team have very good communication and information sharing systems to assist with maintaining consistent standards of behaviour throughout the college.

Learner's health and safety is promoted well with a robust and systematic approach to assessing risks and taking actions to ensure the college campuses and residencies are safe. Young people learn how to protect themselves in an emergency because they have regular opportunities to practice the evacuation of their residencies which helps to keep them safe. The accommodation is safe and secure and the college demonstrates a vigilant approach to maintaining this for everyone. Monitoring of the site through the evening and night is maintained with learners clear on what to do if they have any concerns.

Overall, there are robust recruitment, selection and vetting processes in place to make sure learners are provided with appropriate adults to work with them. All staff with access to the Halls of Residence have enhanced Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) checks prior to commencing employment. Gaps in employment history are explored and references are verified. All visitors to the college are asked to sign in and are given an identity badge. Other adults on site are also checked in line with the latest recruitment procedures.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Learners benefit from excellent levels of personal support because college staff ensure that they are available when required or called upon. There is a dedicated learner involvement coordinator who organises and coordinates a range of social activities for all learners. New learners are provided with a very good induction which

gives them an excellent start in terms of knowing what support is available to them. Learners are very clear which members of staff they can go to for personal support and freely initiate interaction and seek help from a variety of different people across the campuses. Wardens and the accommodation officer play a central role in supporting learners as well as staff in the international team. In addition, learners benefit from a well coordinated tutorial system which helps to bridge academic and welfare matters. This means that there is effective, regular communication which allows information to be shared appropriately between staff with different roles. Learner support is given a high priority because of this holistic and focused approach to academic and welfare needs.

The college provides an environment where equality of opportunity is important and diversity is understood and promoted. There is an outstanding commitment to actively promoting equality, celebrating diversity and eliminating discrimination. The college with the help of the learners have produced a leaflet, 'A college for all,' where the college's core values are well known and practiced on a day-to-day basis. International learners are helped to integrate into academic and social life. Those learners with additional needs are provided with individualised support that is always based on their assessed needs. Staff ensure learners can reach their full potential and are not disadvantaged in any way. Learners live and learn in an environment where social inclusion for everyone is prioritised and discrimination in any form is not tolerated.

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

The provision is outstanding.

The college actively seeks the views and opinions of learners. The college promotes the 'learners voice' in everything it does and this approach is embedded into campus life. Learners benefit from the college having a variety of ways in which they can express their views and influence the way in which the campuses operate. These include: student council and residence groups as well as regular surveys, consultation with class representatives and members of the international group meetings.

Learners benefit from excellent guidance and support from a range of staff both on arrival and in preparation for leaving the college. There is an excellent personalised induction booklet and international guide that welcomes learners to the college and provides information about life in college and in the local area. There is ongoing support from the international team to help learners at every stage from pre entry to the next stage of their education.

The majority of learners have mobile telephones and there are no concerns amongst learners about being able to contact their parents, friends and families. There is excellent communication between the college and parents throughout the year.

## **Achieving economic wellbeing**

The provision is good.

Learners are provided with good quality accommodation that is comfortable, clean, adequately furnished and well maintained. Each learner has an individual bedroom with adequate facilities. Learners have access to communal areas in each residency which includes kitchens and common rooms. Most learners expressed satisfaction with the accommodation provided.

A small number of learners are in lodgings with host families. This accommodation is arranged directly by the college and provides an alternative to staying in residences. The accommodation officer ensures that host families are suitable and can provide the necessary room and facilities that learners require. The accommodation is monitored during its use and learner feedback is gained on a regular basis to ensure that what is provided meets their individual needs.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is outstanding.

Learners benefit from living in a college that is effectively managed and well run. A comprehensive range of information is readily available about the college, its values, services and operation. Senior managers have a very good insight into how well learners are being supported. Welfare and support teams are led by a conscientious and effective accommodation officer and resident warden who are accountable to a senior staff member of the college. Staff deliver professional and supportive services because they work in partnership with each other and as a team. They are also provided with clear guidance about their roles from competent and supportive managers.

A senior member of the college staff regularly monitors the college's records of risk assessments, sanctions against learners, complaints and accidents, to identify any issues requiring action.

There are sufficient staff to maintain adequate supervision of learners outside teaching time and there are sufficient on call arrangements in place to cover sickness or absence. The college has, and follows, a clear policy for the safety of learners during college organised and arranged journeys, covering college transport, and as far as practicable, use of private vehicles and college use of public transport. Managers have a clear overview of the residential operation which helps to ensure that learners are supported in a consistent and safe manner.

All staff with particular responsibilities for the supervision of learners or the provision of welfare services have job descriptions reflecting those duties, have appropriate competence, receive induction training in those responsibilities when newly appointed, and receive regular review of their supervisory and learner welfare



practice, with clear opportunities for continuing training. There is also an appropriate process for regular review of the performance of each member of staff.

## **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 all staff, including the security guards on site, have been given briefing or training on responding to suspicions or allegations of abuse and know what action they should take in response to such suspicions or allegations.(NMS 3.6)