

Shuttleworth College

Inspection report for Further Education College

Unique reference number	SC041911
Inspection date	25/03/2011
Inspector	Christy Wannop
Type of inspection	Key

Setting address	Shuttleworth College Farms, Farm Office, Old Warden Park, Biggleswade, Bedfordshire, SG18 9EA
Telephone number	01767 626222
Email	
Registered person	Bedford College
Head/ Principal	Ian Pryce
Nominated person	Jo Norman
Date of last inspection	04/12/2006

© Crown copyright 2011

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

You can obtain copies of The Children Act 2004, Every Child Matters and The National Minimum Standards for Children's Services from: The Stationery Office (TSO) PO Box 29, St Crispins, Duke Street, Norwich, NR3 1GN. Tel: 0870 600 5522. Online ordering: www.tso.co.uk/bookshop

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

Shuttleworth College is situated in 500 acres of parkland on a self contained campus. In August 2009 the College became part of Bedford College, and one of eight sites that make up this general further education college (GFE) offering provision from entry to university level. Shuttleworth College offers land based subjects, including equine, horticulture, agricultural and fish management courses. There are currently 24 residential students under the age of 18 years and approximately 30 students over 18 years. They are accommodated in five residential Halls and split into under 18, over 18, male and female halls. There is accommodation suitable for a student with a physical disability. A team of teaching staff provide residential warden supervision during the evening and overnight, supported by appointed wardens from the student group and student support service staff.

There are various commercial interests also operating within Old Warden Park that are quite separate to the college, like the airfield, conference centre and wedding venue operated through the Shuttleworth Trust, who own the site.

Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

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

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Section 87 of the Children Act 1989. The inspection was announced and covered the key national minimum standards in the Every Child Matters outcome areas, plus organisation. This inspection found two shortfalls in the procedure for safe recruitment and in the general quality of halls of residence. The college has good systems for promoting health, and delivers good welfare support for students. Arrangements for safeguarding and child protection are well managed, and the environment is a safe one in which to live and learn. Students get good information about what the college offers and their views are respected. Staff are experienced and enjoy being with young people. Shuttleworth students benefit from an integrated managerial approach led by Bedford College. This is effective and prioritises the student experience, promoting a community atmosphere. Students are well motivated and speak highly of their satisfaction with the college.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection of residential provision by the Commission for Social Care Inspection in October 2006, outcomes for young people were found to be adequate. The college has met all seven recommendations from that inspection. There are now good internet safety arrangements and improved communication systems about disciplinary matters. Wardens have had improved training in welfare issues. Students now have safe and secure storage for personal items in their rooms. Cooking

facilities are now available to them in the residential halls and the shared common room, so they can cook when they wish. Drinking water is now freely available at specially cooled dispensers. Fire safety arrangements have been completely overhauled and new systems meet the satisfaction of the local fire service. Risk assessments are improved and cover all elements of high risk activities and are shared with staff with residential responsibilities. These improvements enhance the student experience of residential provision.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Students are well supported in relation to any health or personal problems. There is a whole college approach to health promotion which is inclusive of both students and staff. Staff with a welfare role have a good understanding of the link between mental, physical and emotional health and awareness of the importance of well-being. Significant issues which arise are identified and managed discreetly. There is appropriate first aid and minor illness treatment available to students at college, with access to medical and dental services as required. These arrangements mean that students get the good first aid and health care they need. Students receive good quality catering provision and the student voice has been particularly effective in driving improvements in this area. Meals are hygienically prepared and served canteen style, and are of good quality and quantity. Students with special dietary, medical or religious needs are well catered for and have a suitable choice of dishes.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The college's system for recruiting staff does not include all elements of the national minimum standard, or follow robust policy, procedure and government 'best practice' guidance. However, staff do not begin working with young people before a satisfactory Criminal Records Bureau check is in place and there is close monitoring of visitors and contractors. This means that in practice, students are protected from unsupervised contact with adults who have not been subject to the college's complete recruitment checking procedures. Otherwise, the college has a proactive approach to safeguarding and keeping children safe. The safeguarding committee and senior staff with designated child protection responsibilities integrate the safeguarding approach throughout the student experience across the college. Staff are well informed, have been well trained and know what to do in the event of an allegation or suspicion of abuse. Students are protected from bullying and harassment. Whilst a few students did report some bullying in halls, generally they are confident that staff act to reduce the impact of any distress. They say they feel safe, their privacy is respected, they can keep their belongings safe and that levels of trust are high.

The college has a clear, accountable and fair disciplinary policy. Students understand the boundaries and the consequences for poor behaviour and there is a strong

support from the welfare team in helping them to do the right thing. Complaints are well managed and students are confident that the residential staff team listen to them and sort things out.

The college is taking effective measures to improve the security of students whilst recognising the unique situation of the college on a large country estate, which is shared with public groups and private businesses. Students have their own living accommodation, secure from public intrusion and regular checks are made to ensure that any visitors are safe to be in the buildings. Fire safety is much improved through new alarm and equipment systems so that students are now well protected from risk of fire. Health and safety is well managed, and students are safe from unnecessary hazards whilst developing a sense of personal responsibility. Significantly students learn to take a mature attitude to their personal safety whilst learning real life challenging skills in their chosen specialism. They learn about the limits and respect safe boundaries. These systems for keeping young people safe whilst they live and learn at the college, are generally strong because staff have taken good action to improve and strengthen practice in respect of the minimum standards in many areas.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Opportunities and support for students to enjoy and achieve continue to be good. There is a picture of strengthening welfare support. Students receive really good personal support from staff. Each student has one or more members of staff to whom he or she can confidently turn for personal guidance or with a personal problem. There is good support for students with disabilities. The welfare support net includes respected personal tutors, the new post of student well being advisor, the experienced student services coordinator, a consistent warden team, qualified therapeutic counsellors, enthusiastic student wardens, and careers advisors. Students say they like and trust staff, appreciate being able to talk to them, and that they really help. One said, 'I get lots of support.'

Relationships between students and with the adults at the college are respectful and there is a positive atmosphere of camaraderie. There is an increasing drive to promote respect for equality and diversity across the college and the students are an active part of developing ways to break down barriers, whether in gender, disability, ethnic identity or cultural heritage and religion. Students talk of how they take care of students and include them in residential life so that no one feels excluded. One student contrasted her experience saying 'I hated school, I love college'.

Enrichment is a strong feature of the learning day and can extend into the evening. Activities are available and the students enjoy impromptu and planned adult-led sports and quizzes. However, in Ofsted surveys, over half the students said there was not enough to do in the evenings. Whilst students are able to amuse themselves, they actively enjoy the presence of the adults and like to be around them and do things with them. Facilities are good and improving for sport, and facilities for social relaxation are much improved in well equipped common rooms.

Students are incredibly well motivated and speak highly of the influence the college has had on their developing aspirations. This demonstrates how the college prioritises and values the student experience whilst learning and living at Shuttleworth.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

This is an area of considerable strength. Students are really enabled to contribute to the operation of residential provision in the college, they are consulted and have a clear voice. Adults and students value the strong sense of community. Students felt unanimously listened to by adults who respect their views, and the college ensures there are effective systems for this to happen formally as well as informally in day-to-day life. The college has really acted on the suggestions of students in some significant areas and this has positively developed the provision in respect of creating a residential identity and food improvements.

Students talked of a 'tight knit community' and of relationships that are good. One described how their self esteem had been boosted and approach to learning transformed whilst at the college, and in particular through the experience of taking responsibility as a student warden. There are excellent arrangements to help students settle in, supported by clear induction and guidance and helpful fellow students. The well- planned Fresher's Week ensures that key messages and relationships are established early on.

Communication with parents is well facilitated. Students can contact parents in private and have good wi-fi service and use of safe internet to keep in touch, as well as more usual payphones. All under eighteen students go home every weekend and so maintain close contact.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is satisfactory.

This is an area that is improving, having previously been poor. Individual bedroom accommodation has been cosmetically improved and is now satisfactory. The five student halls are in two blocks of 1960's accommodation; all single rooms have sinks, and there are shared shower rooms and kitchenettes. Shared spaces, heating and bathrooms have all been improved and students now have a common room, a smoking area under cover in a lovely courtyard, and cooking facilities in halls. Toilets and washing facilities are sufficient for the number of students in each hall, and are private. Students report them to be sufficiently comfortable and they personalise their bedroom space. The college has scheduled further investment over the coming summer in a programme of development across the site.

The college makes good arrangements to integrate all students for the benefit of the community. They enable younger students to benefit from friendships with older

students on site, whilst ensuring that those under 18 are also protected in separate accommodation according to age and gender. Students do go off site to do activities and to do work experience. This is well managed through proper planning and risk assessment in conjunction with parents. This ensures their welfare is also promoted whilst away from the college. Students appreciate the sense of real community that comes with a residential college of this size, saying that they 'get respect' and 'a more personal experience.'

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Management systems are improving, and leadership under the direction of Bedford College is good. There is a range of useful and effective sources of information for students and their parents about the college and the residential provision; so students know what to expect and can make an informed choice about a placement. Several students said that the college has exceeded their expectations. The promotion of equality and diversity is good. The college gives clear and positive messages about the equal value of all students.

There are generally sufficient staff on duty with students in the evening and better supervision at night as wardens now sleep in staff accommodation attached to the student halls. Students know how to contact staff when they need them and the college benefits from the number of staff who live on-site and are available after office hours. The core welfare staff complement has been significantly strengthened by the commitment of the student services coordinator and the introduction of Bedford College full student services team of skilled and focused professionals. This has raised the profile of student welfare. Students recognise that wardens have a key pastoral role in conjunction with tutors and the newly appointed student well-being advisor role. Wardens have a dual role and are long-standing members of academic staff. There is a strength to using teaching staff who bring a sense of the whole student across 24 hours. They have specific residential and welfare duties, with adequate induction and continued training and access to welfare and safeguarding policies, and guidance about professional boundaries. One student said, 'They teach you, but they are always there for you.'

There is clarity of accountability through rigorous reporting, and an effective division of responsibility in the senior management team. A range of monitoring systems, quality assurance models and audits ensure that issues raised through risk assessment, behaviour and discipline, complaints and accidents are acted on. This drive to focus on the student, and the value placed on their experience contributes to improved student welfare. As one student commented, 'I came here, and it's amazing.'

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 careful selection and vetting of all staff and volunteers working with residential students including evidence within recruitment records of all elements of 34.2 (NMS 34)
- ensure students accommodation in halls is satisfactorily furnished, decorated and maintained (NMS 36)