



*Making Social Care  
Better for People*

# inspection report

## FURTHER EDUCATION COLLEGE

### **Oaklands College**

**Smallford Campus  
Hatfield Road  
St Albans  
Herts  
AL4 0JA**

*Lead Inspector*  
Angela Dalton

*Announced Inspection*  
13th November 2006 10:15

The Commission for Social Care Inspection aims to:

- Put the people who use social care first
- Improve services and stamp out bad practice
- Be an expert voice on social care
- Practise what we preach in our own organisation

Reader Information	
Document Purpose	Inspection Report
Author	CSCI
Audience	General Public
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This is a report of an inspection to assess whether services are meeting the needs of people who use them. The legal basis for conducting inspections is the Care Standards Act 2000 and the relevant National Minimum Standards for this establishment are those for *Further Education Colleges*. They can be found at [www.dh.gov.uk](http://www.dh.gov.uk) or obtained 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](http://www.tso.co.uk/bookshop)

*Every Child Matters*, outlined the government's vision for children's services and formed the basis of the Children Act 2004. It provides a framework for inspection so that children's services should be judged on their contribution to the outcomes considered essential to wellbeing in childhood and later life. Those outcomes are:

- Being healthy
- Staying safe
- Enjoying and achieving
- Making a contribution; and
- Achieving economic wellbeing.

In response, the Commission for Social Care Inspection has re-ordered the national minimum standards for children's services under the five outcomes, for reporting purposes. A further section has been created under 'Management' to cover those issues that will potentially impact on all the outcomes above.

Copies of *Every Child Matters* and *The Children Act 2004* are available from The Stationery Office as above.

# COLLEGE INFORMATION

<b>Name of college</b>	Oaklands College
<b>Address</b>	Smallford Campus Hatfield Road St Albans Herts AL4 0JA
<b>Telephone number</b>	01727 737000
<b>Fax number</b>	
<b>Email address</b>	judith.bell@oaklands.co.uk
<b>Provider Web address</b>	
<b>Name of Governing body, Person or Authority responsible for the college</b>	Oaklands College
<b>Name of Principal</b>	Mark Dawe
<b>Name of person responsible for welfare and accommodation of students under 18</b>	Toni Beck
<b>Age range of residential pupils</b>	16+
<b>Date of last welfare inspection</b>	16 <sup>th</sup> March 2005

### **Brief Description of the College:**

Accommodation for students is provided in two groups of houses located in the grounds. In East Drive are three pairs of semi-detached houses, each with their own back garden. The properties can house up to five students and offer single accommodation bedrooms, a small kitchen, shower and toilet. Those offering accommodation to four students have additional lounge space. The properties in North Drive are situated much closer to the main buildings. Within the main complex are a fitness centre, a common room and a cafeteria. There are also external facilities including a laundry for student use and an all-weather Astroturf pitch.

Students attend college for academic courses and are part of Arsenal Girls' Academy for the practical component of the course.

# SUMMARY

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

This inspection was conducted by two inspectors on 13<sup>th</sup> November 2006 between 10.15am and 5.45pm. Inspectors met with student s and staff and toured some areas of the college and residences. Parents and students were asked to complete questionnaires prior to the inspection. The comments made were reflected in some of the inspectors' findings. There have been some improvements since the previous inspection in March 2005 regarding environmental safety aspects: a potholed driveway has been tarmaced and additional lighting supplied. Some houses have been redecorated and others are in the process of having internal painting completed. There have been major staffing changes since the previous inspection but this does not appear to have had a negative impact upon the students' welfare.

The full fee paid is £3,705. The largest residential bursary is £3,295, leaving a balance of £410.

## **What the college does well:**

The students stated that they were well supported regarding any welfare requirements. Parents reinforced the fact that that they felt their daughters were content and supported whilst living at Oaklands College. Students clearly enjoy life and stated that they had made friends and were appreciating the opportunity to play football and combine this with studying. The inspectors observed good relationships between staff and students. Night safety equipment is provided as the houses are some way down a driveway and all students have access to a fluorescent vest and torch. An efficient child protection policy is in place and staff have a good awareness of the process.

## **What has improved since the last inspection?**

Communication between the Arsenal Football Academy and the college has improved. Football staff are now based 'on site' and this has resulted in more seamless communication between the college and football staff. Information is shared on a regular basis and ensures that issues that may escalate can be dealt with at an early stage. Policies and procedures have been updated and include the following: how children who bully are supported and how bullying can be avoided; updated missing student policy; reviewed tenancy agreement with the inclusion of frequently asked questions for parents; creation of a robust restraint policy and recording checks made upon students. A driveway has been tarmaced which was previously pitted and presented a hazard. Additional lighting has been provided to ensure improved security for students using the campus at night.

## **What they could do better:**

One of the major issues students' experience is limited and poor internet access. The structure of the college day makes it difficult for residential students who spend time football training and studying to access computers. The college is investing in wireless access but teething problems are impeding internet access for students – some of whom are international. Each house has a mobile 'phone for emergency use but they prove unreliable and do not work adequately – there are no landlines in the houses. Activities for residential students are infrequent and a specific budget is not identified. The communal areas of the houses (not all have a lounge) are stark – lampshades and lounge curtains were missing; gas and electricity meters are on display. Gardens are mown but no attention given to the surrounding border areas. Drainage pipes are loose and corroded, which are likely to pose problems in the future. Students had left some front doors open on the day of inspection. No fire training is in place for students and they may benefit from security training. Students raised the issue of access to the gym which they are unable to use unless a qualified member of staff is available – this resource is currently very limited. More local laundry facilities would be beneficial to the students as they currently have to walk across campus with their washing and pay £1.50 to use the washing machine and £1.50 for the tumble dryer. Because of the level of training that the students do they make at least two trips each week to the laundry resulting in an average cost of £24 per month to each student (the majority of whom are under 18). Some improvements are required regarding documentation specifically parental awareness of some policies, recruitment evidence and risk assessments.

Please contact the Principal for advice of actions taken in response to this inspection.

The report of this inspection is available from [enquiries@csci.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@csci.gsi.gov.uk) or by contacting your local CSCI office. The summary of this inspection report can be made available in other formats on request.

# **DETAILS OF INSPECTOR FINDINGS**

## **CONTENTS**

Being Healthy

Staying Safe

Enjoying and Achieving

Making a Positive Contribution

Achieving Economic Wellbeing

Management

Scoring of Outcomes

Recommended Actions identified during the inspection



# Being Healthy

## The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- Under-age drinking, substance abuse and possession of obscene material by students are appropriately countered.(NMS 6)
- Students receive first aid and health care as necessary.(NMS 14)
- Students are adequately supervised when ill.(NMS 15)
- Students are supported in relation to any health or personal problems.(NMS 16)
- Students receive good quality catering provision.(NMS 22)
- Students have access to food and drinking water in addition to main meals.(NMS 23)
- Students are suitably accommodated when ill.(NMS 43)

**The Commission considers Standards 14 and 16 the key standards to be inspected.**

## JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):

**6,14,16**

Quality in this outcome area is **adequate**.

An increased availability of policies to parents would ensure an improvement. Students are well supported in the management of health and personal problems.

This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

## EVIDENCE:

Parents who responded to the questionnaire identified that that they were aware of the college's policy regarding alcohol but would welcome more information on policies relating to pornography and substance misuse. Students confirmed that they were aware of the policies and who they would seek more information from. Each student is registered with a local G.P. (the college uses one Practice) but some students prefer to remain registered with their own G.P. College staff offer to support to attend appointments where requested or required. Students retain their own medication and a first aider is on site at all times. This information is identified in the student handbook so that parents and students are aware of the protocol prior to moving into the college.

Enrichment and welfare staff have good links with the students and residential staff. All students were aware of the support networks available: one student confirmed that she had used staff when they felt homesick and had benefited from the support. Improved communication between Arsenal Academy and the college has resulted in a more streamlined communication ensuring that any issues are swiftly identified and immediately and effectively dealt with.

# Staying Safe

## The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- Students are protected from bullying and harassment.(NMS 2)
- Students are protected from abuse.(NMS 3)
- Use of discipline with students is fair and appropriate.(NMS 4)
- Students' complaints are adequately responded to.(NMS 5)
- Students are protected from the risk of fire.(NMS 24)
- The welfare of any young people accommodated by the college other than its own students is safeguarded and promoted.(NMS 26)
- Students' safety and welfare are protected during high risk activities.(NMS 27)
- Students' personal privacy is respected.(NMS 33)
- There is careful selection and vetting of all staff and volunteers working with residential students.(NMS 34)
- Students are protected from unsupervised contact with adults who have not been, subject to the college's complete recruitment checking procedures.(NMS 35)
- Students have their own living accommodation, secure from public intrusion.(NMS 37)
- Any security or surveillance measures provide security to protect students without compromising their privacy.(NMS 38)
- Students are given reasonable protection from safety hazards.(NMS 42)

**The Commission considers Standards 2, 3, 4, 5, 24, 33, 34, 35, 37 and 42 the key standards to be inspected.**

**JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):**

**2,3,4,5,24,27,33,34,35,37,42**

Quality in this outcome area is mostly **adequate**.

Developments are required to ensure better awareness of health and safety with regard to fire awareness and risk assessments. Student safety is not currently assured due to incomplete recruitment checks being conducted. The standard of accommodation would benefit from some improvements. This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

## **EVIDENCE:**

A comprehensive anti bullying policy is in place and this has been expanded since the previous inspection to incorporate how children who bully are supported and how bullying can be avoided. The college has a history of dealing appropriately with any Child Protection issues and has effective links with the local Child Protection Team. All staff have training and receive a wallet size information card to guide them through appropriate steps to take if a concern is identified. Again, this information is available in the student handbook and students receive information regarding welfare on their induction to the college. This was confirmed in discussions that inspectors had with students. Some students felt that they were tarnished by a reputation achieved by previous residents and that some punishments were unfair: records reflected any action taken against misdemeanours. The student handbook and tenancy agreement clearly states what code of conduct is in place. This also advises students and parents how to make a complaint: a robust complaints policy is in place.

Houses are not equipped with emergency lighting and students do not participate in fire drills. Fire safety should be attended to as a matter of urgency to ensure all students know what action to take in the event of a fire. A review of the facilities should occur to provide an alternative to emergency lighting and this is to be borne in mind when fire drills occur.

An inspector met with the Health and Safety officer to inspect risk assessments: further work is required to better ensure that risks are identified and further detail is needed to explain how the risk is monitored, managed and met. Although lighting in one driveway is in place improvements are occurring but no risk assessment is in place. Earlier examples of fire and security safety also require risk assessing. Many generic risk assessments regarding the environment and issues that specifically affect residential students have not been recorded. Risk assessments have been completed by residential staff and again, expansion is needed. This is the third occasion risk assessments have been referred to at an inspection by CSCI. The unreliability of the house mobile phones is not acceptable as this is the only means that students have of contacting staff for assistance or raising an alarm, as there are no landlines available. An inspector tried to use a phone but it turned itself off demonstrating the problems that students experience.

Privacy of students is observed and a knock and wait policy is used by staff. The student handbook clearly identifies under what circumstances a room would be searched and students were aware of this policy.

Although a comprehensive recruitment policy exists, written references were not in place for new staff or those who changed position to become residential workers. Criminal Record Bureau checks are conducted for all staff directly employed by the college. Cleaning and catering staff are contracted to work in the college. It was not possible to identify whether all recruitment checks had

been conducted by the agencies used, as there was no record available. Confirmation was not in place that Criminal Record Bureau checks had been conducted.

No concerns were raised at this inspection regarding the presence of the security guard – it had been requested following the previous inspection that they make themselves known to students to prevent mistaken identity as an intruder. It may be a sign that students feel safe in the college a front door was left open with no students in the house.

# Enjoying and Achieving

## The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- Students have access to a range and choice of activities.(NMS 11)
- Students receive personal support from staff.(NMS 13)
- Students do not experience inappropriate discrimination.(NMS 17)
- Student welfare is not compromised by unusual or onerous demands.(NMS 25)
- Students have access to a range of recreational areas.(NMS 41)

## The Commission considers Standards 13 and 17 the key Standards to be inspected.

### JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):

#### **11,13,17**

Quality in this outcome area is **adequate**.

Students do not have access to an activities programme. Staff support students well and equal opportunities and anti discrimination policies are adhered to.

This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

### **EVIDENCE:**

Residential students have a complex timetable as they study in addition to football training and competing in matches. A weekly trip to the supermarket takes place but there are very few organised activities. Internet access is limited and those who remain on site at the weekend would greatly value the availability to maintain contact with friends and family. The limited access to the library also impedes the students from completing college work in the evenings. Students raised the issue of access to the gym which they are unable to use unless a qualified member of staff is available – this resource is currently very limited. No specified activities budget is identified so staff are unsure what monies are available. Very few activities occur and no programme is available to enable students to make choices or plan ahead.

Students confirmed that they had a good rapport with staff and were able to make their needs known. Staff were already aware of the issues raised by students during the inspection illustrating a culture of openness. An equal opportunities policy is adhered to and guidance is provided in the student handbook regarding advice should discrimination occur.

# Making a Positive Contribution

## The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- Students are enabled to contribute to the operation of residential provision in the college.(NMS 12)
- Students can maintain private contact with their parents and families(NMS 18)
- Students receive guidance, both on arrival at the college and in preparing to leave the college.(NMS 20)
- There are sound relationships between staff and students.(NMS 32)

**The Commission considers Standards 12 and 18 the key standards to be inspected.**

## JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):

### **12,18**

Quality in this outcome area is **adequate**.

Students are afforded the opportunity to contribute to the running of the residential provision. Contact with family and friends is impeded by poor internet provision.

This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

## **EVIDENCE:**

Students are represented on the College Council and staff meet regularly with students both formally and informally. Staff join students at mealtimes which promotes meals as a social occasion but also a relaxed atmosphere in which to discuss any concerns. Students are able to maintain contact with their families but if they do not have access to a personal mobile phone they have to use the payphone which is not situated in the houses. As discussed earlier improved internet access would improve the opportunity to maintain contact with families and friends.



# Achieving Economic Wellbeing

## The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- The college's organisation of residential provision safeguards students' welfare.(NMS 10)
- Students' personal possessions and money are protected.(NMS 19)
- Students are provided with satisfactory living accommodation.(NMS 36)
- Students have satisfactory sleeping accommodation.(NMS 39)
- Students have adequate and adequately private toilet and washing facilities.(NMS 40)
- There are arrangements to ensure that students' clothing and bedding are adequately laundered.(NMS 44)
- Students can buy food and personal requisites while accommodated at college.(NMS 45)
- The welfare of students placed by the college in lodgings is safeguarded and promoted. (NMS 46)
- The welfare of students is safeguarded and promoted while accommodated away from the college site on a short-stay basis. (NMS 47)

**The Commission considers Standards 46 and 47 the key standards to be inspected.**

## **JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):**

### **36,44 (46 & 47 Not applicable)**

Quality in this outcome area is **adequate**.

The standard of accommodation would benefit from some improvements. Expansion of information prior to moving in would assist students and their families. This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

## **EVIDENCE:**

Although students' bedrooms are personalised and well decorated the communal areas of the houses (not all have a lounge) are stark – lampshades and lounge curtains are missing and gas and electricity meters are on display.

An external meter was not attached to the wall. Gardens are mown but no attention given to the surrounding border areas. At the rear of some houses drainage pipes are loose and corroded, which are likely to pose problems in the future. The common room has been refurbished and is in the process of being made more comfortable with the purchase of soft furnishings, a wide screen television and pictures.

More local laundry facilities would be beneficial to the students as they currently have to walk across campus with their washing and pay £1.50 to use the washing machine and £1.50 for the tumble dryer. Because of the level of training that the students do they make at least two trips each week to the laundry resulting in an average cost of £24 per month to each student (the majority of whom are under 18).

A copy of 'Frequently Asked Questions' accompanies the student handbook and college information prior to students moving to college. It is recommended that this information be expanded to include the list of equipment available to assist in informing students about items that they will need. The inspectors also suggested that documentation identifying parental permission in relation to 'staying out' times be expanded upon. This would ensure that the college recognises its duty of care should parental wishes not be adhered to by students.

# Management

## The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- A clear statement of the principles of residential provision and student support at the college is available to those needing this information.(NMS 1)
- The safeguarding and promotion of students' health and welfare are supported by appropriate records.(NMS 7)
- There is clear leadership of residential provision in the college.(NMS 8)
- Crises affecting students' welfare are effectively managed.(NMS 9)
- Risk assessment and college record keeping contribute to students' welfare.(NMS 21)
- Students are appropriately supervised during free time.(NMS 28)
- Students are adequately supervised by staff.(NMS 29)
- Staff responsible for residential students have specific residential and welfare duties, with adequate induction and continued training.(NMS 30)
- Students are looked after by staff following clear residential and welfare policies and practice.(NMS 31)

**The Commission considers Standards 1, 21, 29 and 30 the key standards to be inspected.**

## **JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):**

**1,21, 29,30**

Quality in this outcome area is **adequate**.

The statement of principles outlines the ethos of the college and the support networks in place for students. Trained staff are available to support students but supervision arrangements need to be reviewed.

This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

## **EVIDENCE:**

Each student receives a copy of the student handbook and on arrival a copy of the tenancy agreement. These documents clearly identify the college's policies on student support, welfare and code of conduct. Information regarding accommodation and room allocation are expanded upon in the tenancy

agreement. The views of students are regularly audited and staff are exploring the inclusion of results in the annual review of the statement of principles.

A member of residential staff is always available but if students wish to go off campus or require supervision elsewhere it means that another member of staff has to act as back up. This affects activities from occurring as all students have to participate to ensure adequate staff cover. Staffing cover needs to be formalised to enable more flexibility for students to participate in activities. The health and safety officer regularly reviews the college's records to identify any action required regarding accidents and presents his findings in a health and safety report.

All staff receive an induction and their performance is regularly reviewed. As stated earlier all staff attend child protection training and have the opportunity to access additional relevant training.

# SCORING OF OUTCOMES

This page summarises the assessment of the extent to which the National Minimum Standards for Further Education Colleges have been met and uses the following scale.

**4** Standard Exceeded (Commendable)      **3** Standard Met (No Shortfalls)  
**2** Standard Almost Met (Minor Shortfalls)      **1** Standard Not Met (Major Shortfalls)

"X" in the standard met box denotes standard not assessed on this occasion

"N/A" in the standard met box denotes standard not applicable

BEING HEALTHY	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
<b>6</b>	2
<b>14</b>	3
<b>15</b>	X
<b>16</b>	3
<b>22</b>	X
<b>23</b>	X
<b>43</b>	X

STAYING SAFE	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
<b>2</b>	3
<b>3</b>	3
<b>4</b>	3
<b>5</b>	3
<b>24</b>	2
<b>26</b>	X
<b>27</b>	2
<b>33</b>	3
<b>34</b>	2
<b>35</b>	1
<b>37</b>	2
<b>38</b>	X
<b>42</b>	2

ENJOYING AND ACHIEVING	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
<b>11</b>	1
<b>13</b>	3
<b>17</b>	3
<b>25</b>	X
<b>41</b>	X

MAKING A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
<b>12</b>	3
<b>18</b>	2
<b>20</b>	X
<b>32</b>	X

ACHIEVING ECONOMIC WELLBEING	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
<b>10</b>	X
<b>19</b>	X
<b>36</b>	2
<b>39</b>	X
<b>40</b>	X
<b>44</b>	3
<b>45</b>	X
<b>46</b>	N/A
<b>47</b>	N/A

# SCORING OF OUTCOMES

## Continued

MANAGEMENT	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
<b>1</b>	3
<b>7</b>	X
<b>8</b>	X
<b>9</b>	X
<b>21</b>	3
<b>28</b>	X
<b>29</b>	2
<b>30</b>	3
<b>31</b>	X

Are there any outstanding recommendations from the last inspection? Yes

### RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

This section sets out the actions that must be taken so that the proprietor meets the Children Act 1989, Inspection of Schools and Colleges Regulations 2002 and the National Minimum Standards.

No.	Standard	Recommendation	Timescale for action (Serious welfare concerns only)
1	FE2	Parents should be made aware of the college policy on pornography and substance abuse.	
2	FE24	Residential students should receive fire training to inform them of actions to take in a fire. The houses have no emergency lighting and an alternative should be explored to ensure lighting is available in the event of a power failure.	30/01/07
3	FE27	A full risk assessment must be carried out on all aspects of living within the college. This should include the speed of traffic on the campus and the location of the student's accommodation. <b>This recommendation was made at the previous inspection.</b> Risk assessments require more detail to evidence how risks are monitored, managed and met.	
4	FE34	Written references should be in place which specifically state any known reason why a person should not be employed to work with young people.	09/12/06
5	FE35	Records should reflect that Criminal Record Bureau checks are conducted regarding contract and agency staff.	09/12/06
6	FE37	Adequate security measures should be in place.	09/12/06
7	FE42	Students should not be exposed to unnecessary risks: mobile phones should be in good working order; adequate fire training should be in place.	09/12/06

8	FE11	An identified activities budget should be made available with adequate staff levels to facilitate a choice of regular activities. Internet access should be in place to meet the needs of the students.	
9	FE18	Improved internet access would facilitate improved student contact with their families.	
10	FE36	The standard of accommodation (both internally and externally) would benefit from some improvements.	
11	FE44	The cost and location of the laundry provision should be reviewed.	



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