

Chichester College

Inspection report for further education college

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Inspector	David Coulter
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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

Chichester College is a College of Further Education located in the city of Chichester, West Sussex. The college operates from a number of sites in and around Chichester and one on the outskirts of Pulborough, known as the Brinsbury. Accommodation for 16 to 18-year-old students is available in halls of residence on the main Chichester campus and with host families. The college is one of the few further education colleges in England that caters for large numbers of international students.

Summary

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

The college continues to grow and develop its educational provision. At the time of the inspection the college was providing residential accommodation to over 100 students in the 16 to 18 age group, the majority of whom were residing in the Woodlands hall of residence on the Chichester campus. The cultural diversity of the student body continues to grow and 47 different nationalities are currently represented in the student body.

Students spoke in positive terms about their lives at college and felt their views were regularly sought and suggestions appropriately considered. Special mention was made of the level of support they received from both residential and teaching staff. All those spoken with indicated that the information they received prior to admission conveyed an accurate picture of existing provision. A recent student satisfaction survey indicated a high degree of satisfaction with the welcome they received on admission, the cleanliness of residential accommodation and security arrangements. All said they felt safe. Although there was general satisfaction with accommodation in the halls of residence, it was clear that many found laundry facilities inadequate. Students residing in 'home stay' placements indicated they were enjoying the experience of living with their host families.

An extremely committed staff team ensure students not only achieve academic success but participate fully in the colleges enrichment programme that provides a wide range of social, recreational and cultural activities. Although there is one recommendation arising from the inspection it is aimed at further improving existing facilities and does not reflect on the overall provision which is outstanding in all areas.

Improvements since the last inspection

The one recommendation arising from the last inspection has been appropriately addressed. Students with identified health and welfare needs now have individual plans to ensure they are appropriately met.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

An effective system has been developed that ensures the health needs of each student are clearly identified prior to admission. Individual plans are developed to address any needs identified. As students accessing residential accommodation are under 18, staff ensure consents for emergency and non-emergency treatment are obtained from parents or guardians. Although the majority of young people have good health, they can register with a local General Practitioner and dentist if they require treatment. Staff closely monitor the health and well-being of students and will help them seek out specialist services to address areas such as mental health. Students who have accommodation in host families in the community are also able to receive this excellent standard of care. Staff are clearly aware of cultural differences in approaches to health and work alongside students to access treatments that suit them. There are effective systems that ensure medication is stored and administered appropriately. Emergency first aid is provided by a pool of qualified staff.

Students are encouraged to adopt healthy lifestyles by taking regular exercise, eating wisely and refraining from harmful behaviours such as smoking. Students can access a range of sporting and recreational facilities both on the college campus and at the nearby leisure centre. Students are provided with a broad range of information on health related issues including sexual health and alcohol and substance abuse. Information is conveyed via discussions, presentations and literature. Students are made aware of the health related consequences of irresponsible behaviour. Individuals are encouraged to monitor their own health and staff raise awareness of medical conditions commonly associated with this age group. Staff provide access to a confidential testing service for sexual health.

Students receive outstanding pastoral care and support within the college and their progress is carefully monitored. Staff are clearly aware of the difficulties some young people experience living away from home for the first time and provide a comprehensive induction programme to help them settle in. A well-established tutorial system provides both individual and group support. The college has a number of counsellors based on the main campus who are always available for consultation. Students reported they were well supported by staff throughout the college. All identified staff they could confide in.

Catering facilities have considerably improved since the last inspection and the Coasters eating area has been completely refurbished. Students are provided with a daily allowance for food that they can use at any of the college's catering outlets that include a self-service restaurant, a sandwich bar, coffee bars and a shop. The shop provides a range of foods from different countries. Healthy eating options are promoted across all the college outlets. Students generally spoke in positive terms about the food on offer and appreciate the recent changes to the facilities including the introduction of outside eating areas. Students are regularly consulted about food and a number indicated they had already requested more of ethnic dishes. Although

students have limited facilities for producing food within halls they have access to vending machines for drinks and snacks. Students residing in the community indicated they had established suitable catering arrangements with their host families.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Students and staff are kept safe by the application of robust health and safety practices. Risk assessments are extensively used to ensure environments and activities do not pose any potential hazards. Given the large population of students that reside in the halls of residence, fire safety is given an extremely high priority. For example, smoking is not permitted and there are smoke detectors throughout the building. Regular fire drills, that are supervised by designated fire officers, ensure students remain familiar with evacuation procedures. In order to further minimise risk the electrical appliances of all students are subject to a safety test before they can be used in their rooms.

A rigorous recruitment procedure ensures that all staff are appropriately vetted and found to be suitable to work in an educational setting that caters for a diverse population, including vulnerable groups. All college and contract staff are subject to Criminal Record Bureau checks. Host family members are also subject to a comprehensive vetting process. Although the college occupies an open site with public access, security measures are in place to prevent unauthorised access to students' residential accommodation. Security around the halls of residence is good and admission into the halls is restricted to individual's with the requisite pass. All visitors must report and sign in. The college employs security staff who can stop people and asks for identification if necessary. Staff patrol the grounds and buildings but do not intrude on students' accommodation. Students felt that security was not intrusive and respected their privacy.

The college is committed to ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding and all must successfully complete an on-line training course. The college has well-established policies and procedures to keep students safe. All new students receive a handbook that explicitly states expected standards of behaviour. During their induction students are made aware of the college's policies relating to bullying and discriminatory behaviour and that failure to comply could result in expulsion. Staff are aware of the many different ways bullying can manifest itself and keep abreast of trends. For example, a recent staff training initiative raised awareness of the dangers and often devastating effects cyber-bullying can have on young people. The college has five senior staff who act as child protection officers and are the first point of contact if any concerns are raised. Records indicate referrals are made to the appropriate agencies for investigation. A safeguarding report is presented annually to the governing body for monitoring.

Staff are extremely proactive and closely monitor the well-being of young people. Tutors regularly meet with students to discuss all aspects of their lives at college and

will intervene if they feel they are experiencing difficulties in their relationships with other students. Students reported that for the majority of time they enjoy each other's company and peacefully co-exist. All said they feel safe in the college and none had experienced any form of bullying or discriminatory behaviour. While students stated they were aware of the college's complaints procedure they indicated they would, in the first instance, register any worries or concerns to the halls supervisor, student tutor or member of the college staff. It is evident that the majority of concerns or niggles associated with communal living are effectively resolved by staff before they develop into full blown complaints. Any complaints received are dealt with by senior staff.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Students receive excellent support from a range of staff throughout the college that include student tutors, course tutors, accommodation staff, nursing staff and college counsellors. The progress of each student is carefully monitored by personal tutors and any concerns shared between key staff. Any personal issues are dealt with sensitively and in confidence. Communication between staff in different departments is excellent and there is little chance that a student experiencing difficulties would go unnoticed. Any areas of concern are discussed with the student and strategies developed to address them. Students spoken with during the inspection indicated they had numerous members of staff they could turn to for personal advice and guidance. .

The college provides an open and inclusive environment that both recognises and celebrates diversity. The large international student population adds a unique dimension to life within the college and enhances the experience of local students. For example, students organise many multi-cultural events for the whole student body. A recent food festival proved extremely successful and introduced large numbers of students and staff to the cuisines of many different cultures. Anti-discriminatory practice and equal opportunities are embedded in all aspects of college life and staff aim to meet the needs of students regardless of gender, race, religion, disabilities or sexual orientation. All staff receive equality and diversity training and student tutorials are frequently used to raise awareness of cultural differences. As many students come from overseas, specialist linguists are employed to overcome communication difficulties. The college has excellent support systems for students who need support with complex learning and/or physical difficulties.

The college offers an enrichment programme that provides students access to a wide range of extra-curricula social and recreational activities. This programme adds an important dimension to the life of students at Chichester and provides opportunities to sample other aspects of British life. During their college life students are encouraged to participate in sporting and recreational activities and many are active members of college teams. The college has an extremely active student union that organises social events both on campus and in the local area. Recent activities have

included ice-skating, go-karting and a visit to a theme park. Such trips are extremely popular and students spoke in positive terms about their experiences.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Staff involve students in the development of the college. Regular forums, surveys, comment cards, welfare interviews and tutorial sessions are used to illicit the views of students on such things as catering and residential facilities. The student union is also extremely proactive in ascertaining student views and in representing them in focus groups. Students feel their views are taken seriously and that college management are generally responsive to their suggestions. They were able to point to the recent improvement in catering facilities as a product of co-operation and successful joint working.

The college provides opportunities and facilities for students to maintain contact with their families. Students can access computers with internet connections to maintain contact. While there are a number of public pay phones within the halls of residence, the majority of students now use their own mobile phones. that enables students to contact their parents and families in private. Each student is provided with a pigeon hole to receive post and there is an effective system for the delivery of parcels. The college welcomes contact from student's families and maintain links via the colleges international liaison officers.

The college has a team of dedicated staff who deal with the recruitment and support of international students. The team ensure prospective students receive appropriate information on the courses and training on offer, visa requirements and the different type of residential accommodation available. Students indicated that the information they received prior to arrival was extremely good and painted an accurate picture of the college's provision. Students who decide to reside in the community are matched with an appropriate host family and provided with information on their home. College staff regularly visit the Falkland Islands, Japan, the Middle East and Korea to meet agents and promote the college to new prospective students. On arrival all new students undertake a detailed induction programme that introduces them to life at college and includes a tour of Chichester and its surrounding area. The programme also provides key information on living in Britain and guidance on how to stay safe. Students spoke in positive terms about the programme.

Tutors assist students in identifying potential career paths and provide guidance in accessing employment and higher education opportunities. Workshops help students develop practical skills in areas such as interviewing, writing a CV and completing university applications. Expert guest speakers ensure information and guidance remains current.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is outstanding.

The college has established an excellent mix of boarding provision with halls of residence on the main college site and home stay placements in the local community. One of the halls of residence provides accommodation solely for those under 18. Students undertaking courses at the Brinsbury campus, either live in 'home stay' accommodation in the local area or travel daily from Chichester.

Accommodation within the Woodlands Hall of Residence was observed to be clean, tidy and in good decorative order. The halls contain a male and female wing each with their own bathroom and toilet facilities. A number of the rooms have en suite shower facilities. Communal areas are comfortably furnished and welcoming. Students were generally satisfied with the quality of their rooms. Toilet and shower facilities were assessed as being adequate and there is a consistent supply of hot water. Although students can access laundry facilities they are inadequate for the number of residents accommodated.

The college has a team of dedicated staff who recruit, place and inspect home stay accommodation. Many of the host families have been with the college for many years and are extremely conversant with the specific needs of particular cultural groups. For example a number of host families will consistently take female students from Japan while others will accommodate young men from the middle east. It is evident that staff take great care in placing students with families that will meet their needs. The success rate is extremely high and very few placements are terminated prematurely. Students' well-being is monitored throughout their stays and they are protected by the same robust procedures as on site provision.

The college is not risk averse and students are encouraged to live full and active lives including participating in off site activities. There is a well-established procedure in place to protect students whilst accommodated away from the college site. All off-site trips are robustly risk assessed and staff normally visit locations in advance to inspect the facilities. All risk assessments and arrangements are scrutinised by members of the senior management team who provide the final approval. Students are provided with personal insurance information prior to embarking on trips.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

A set of core values underpins all aspects of college life. The values are reflected in college literature and displayed in posters located in key positions around the campus. The college's values are translated into a comprehensive range of policies, procedures and working practices. The college aims to ensure that residential students not only succeed educationally, but have an enjoyable and stimulating time during their stays. There is a strong emphasis on helping students build up their self-confidence. This is especially important for the many students who are not only living

away from home for the first time but doing so in unfamiliar surroundings in a new culture. The approach developed by the college is extremely successfully and residential students consistently achieve good exam results and many feel confident enough to progress directly to higher education.

The College operates with an extremely motivated staff team who are ably led by a Principal determined to continuously improve the quality of the college experience for students. There is a culture of training and development within the college and expectation that staff will regularly update their knowledge and skills. Staff have specific responsibilities that are explicit in their job descriptions. All new residential staff are introduced to the college culture via a well-developed induction programme and receive regular supervision. Communication systems are excellent and key information relating to students is appropriately shared between staff in different departments.

The management team and governors recognise the unique contribution residential students make to college life and are committed to improving provision both on the campus and in the local community. The management team consult widely on new developments and the views of students and staff are regularly sought. This inclusive approach fosters a sense of ownership amongst students and those spoken with appreciated being able to influence the decision making process. There is a widely held view amongst residential students that most aspects of residential life within the college are improving.

There is an expectation by staff that students will act responsibly and comply with residential rules and expectations. Students feel that staff are fair and apply the rules consistently. If a student breaches the rules they can face a sanction, this often consists of being grounded. Although supervision of students is non-intrusive staff have developed systems to ensure all students are kept safe and accounted for at the end of each day. Duty staff are always available for advice and guidance. The social interactions between staff and students was observed to be both spontaneous and warm. It is evident staff and students have established mutually respectful relationships. Students indicated that residential staff aim to ensure that they not only get a good education but access the many social, recreational and cultural opportunities available to them during their stays.

The promotion of equality and diversity within the college is outstanding. All students are treated with respect regardless of race, religion, disabilities or sexual orientation. International students are welcomed on arrival and those spoken with said they were immediately made to feel part of the college community. A committed staff ensure that new students settle quickly and are appropriately supported throughout the duration of their lives.

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 students have satisfactory, sufficient and accessible facilities to wash and dry their own clothing (NMS 44.2)