

Kingston Maurward College

Inspection report for further education college

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Inspector	Roy Bega
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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

Kingston Maurward College is set in a 300 hectare (750 acre) estate two miles from the county town of Dorchester.

The college offers a vast range of full and part time work based and further education courses. As an associate college of Bournemouth University it is also able to provide higher education courses including foundation degrees. A range of study options is also available to school pupils between 14 - 16 years.

The college provides a limited range of residential accommodation on site which consists predominantly of single study bedrooms in groups of eight to ten students to a house.

A minority of students living in college accommodation are aged under 18 years. In addition a small variable number of under 18 year olds may live in college accommodation when they are required to be on early morning and evening agricultural and equine duties.

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 accommodation provision. Three recommendations raised from the previous inspection in March 2009 in respect of safeguarding issues and improvements to residential accommodation are met.

Currently the college is providing residential accommodation to 17 students in the 16 to 18 age group. At the time of this visit under 18 year old students were being accommodated with adult students with appropriate risk assessments in place. The adult students are employed as part time accommodation wardens line managed by an experienced senior warden. Appropriate selection, recruitment and training are in place.

Students spoke in positive terms about their lives at college and felt their views are regularly sought and suggestions appropriately considered. Special mention was made of the level of support they receive 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 feel safe. Although there was general satisfaction with accommodation in the halls of residence, it was clear that several would appreciate more comfortable

seating in the communal areas.

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 providing additional information for students and parents in the college's statement of principles and practice and does not reflect on the overall provision which is outstanding in all areas.

Improvements since the last inspection

The three recommendations arising from the previous inspection in March 2009 have been appropriately addressed. Additional assistant residential wardens have been appointed and completed a full safeguarding of children and young people training course. Communal space has increased with improved kitchen facilities, furnishings and additional computer access for students.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Students receive outstanding pastoral care and support within Kingston Maurward 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 can confide in.

Students receive excellent standards of health care throughout their stay at the college. Pre arrival health information is gained together with consents for emergency and non emergency treatment. All students are encouraged to register with a local General Practitioner and dentist as appropriate. The local General Practitioner's surgery will visit the college site at the beginning of term for students to register. There is a large variety of professionals young people can access and liaise with for unforeseen situations that may occur during their stay at the college. There is an excellent joint protocol between welfare in accommodation and health to ensure students health is maintained. The college actively promotes national health campaigns with excellent information displayed around the site relating to health education. Welfare plans are currently being developed further with a new plan in place using a computerised system. Any student with a health or welfare concern will have a care plan in place for specific staff to follow and monitor. There are effective systems that ensure medication is stored and administered appropriately. Emergency first aid is provided by a pool of qualified staff.

The college has a clear and robust policy on drugs, alcohol and substance abuse. Staff are well informed of its contents and the referral/disciplinary process is in place if needed. Evidence shows that the college is vigilant and determined in dealing with any drug, alcohol or substance abuse matters. Close communication with other agencies allows staff to refer students on for specialist help if appropriate.

Catering is very good. Feedback from students identifies some areas that the college needs to improve which are being acted upon. The catering department and college staff are very pro-active in listening to and making changes in line with students' views and ideas. Such an example is the amount of money students get each day for their food allowance. The college maintains the importance of continuing with food focus groups to carry out further surveys and ascertain an overview of students' eating habits. Students are able to purchase snacks in the halls of residence and have a good variety of food outlets in the college itself, from roast dinners to jacket potatoes to paninis. Special diets are catered for with excellent liaison between the college staff and catering department. Overall there is excellent promotion of healthy eating options within all outlets across the college areas. Catering counter staff are very knowledgeable about individual residents and often make suggestions regarding suitable meals as individuals consider their food options. The catering staff are robustly recruited in line with the college's procedures.

In supporting students to maximise the opportunities provided by living away from home and follow interests outside of college a programme of regular fitness activities is being developed linked to local sport, dance and fitness clubs.

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. Fire safety is given an extremely high priority. For example, smoking is not permitted and there are smoke detectors throughout the buildings. 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. Although the college occupies an open site with public access, stringent 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 ask 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. They are required to complete an initial classroom group safeguarding course and thereafter an annual on-line 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 three senior staff who act as child protection officers (soon to be increased) 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. These differences are celebrated within the College and enhance

the experience of learners. All learners are made aware of equality and diversity topics by the delivery of a cross-college group tutorial programme that is made available to tutors. Anti-discriminatory practice and equal opportunities are embedded in all aspects of College life and staff aim to meet the needs of learners regardless of gender, race, religion, disabilities or sexual orientation. All staff receive equality and diversity training and tutorials are frequently used to raise awareness of cultural differences. The College has excellent support systems for learners who need support with complex learning and /or physical difficulties.

The college is developing an enrichment programme that provides students access to a wide range of extra-curricular social and recreational activities. The aim being to add an important dimension to the life of students at Kingston Maurward. The college has an extremely active and motivated student union which is having a vital input regarding the consultation processes.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Kingston Maurward College has a very strong and highly effective Student Council. Residential students are represented on this body. Focus groups are in place as requested by the student body such as food, social events and marketing. Student Ambassadors sit on the Student Council and the Governing Body and also meet monthly with the Principal in a more social orientated format.

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 and to college governors. Students feel their views are taken seriously and that college management are generally responsive to their suggestions.

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 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.

Students indicate that the information they received prior to arrival is extremely good and paints an accurate picture of the college's provision. On arrival all new students undertake a detailed induction programme that introduces them to life at college and its surrounding area. 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 curriculum vitae and completing university applications. Specialist guest speakers ensure information and guidance remains current.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is outstanding.

The college's organisation of residential provision safeguards students welfare. Where students under 18 are accommodated with adult students appropriate risks assessments are in place. The adult students are employed as part time accommodation wardens line managed by an experienced senior warden. They are selected through the college's rigorous recruitment procedures and complete statutory training. The college's Statement of Principles and Practice made available to parents and students needs to contain more detailed information regarding how accommodation and safeguarding are managed in respect of students under 18 sharing accommodation with adult students.

Existing accommodation has been upgraded to provide a more comfortable and welcoming environment for students. All accommodation now includes increased communal space and fully fitted kitchens to enable students to cater for themselves at weekends.

There is a common room area close to the accommodation which is available for residents to use out of hours which contains network computers, games and consoles. Concerns raised by students during the visit regarding the availability of the computer consoles was resolved before completion of the inspection. Films are available to residents free of charge from the Learning Resource Centre; there is wireless internet to the accommodation blocks and each residential lounge is equipped with a television and digital video disc player.

A 12 month development plan agreed in consultation with students includes social activities/events, better equipped common rooms to provide additional activities and entertainment opportunities for learners to attend part-time evening courses free of charge. The Principal holds a monthly informal event with resident students known as ' Pizza with the Principal'. The most recent discussion from this meeting is finding a means to help residents into part time employment while based at the College to enable them to earn money. Some students have already taken up the opportunity in becoming employed with the college's hospitality department at week-ends.

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 stay. There is a strong emphasis on helping students build up their self-confidence. 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 indicate 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 stay.

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. A committed staff team ensure that new students settle quickly and are appropriately supported throughout the duration of their lives at the college.

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 the college's Statement of Principles and Practice made available to parents and students contains more detailed information regarding how accommodation and safeguarding are managed in respect of students under 18 sharing accommodation with adult students. (NMS 1.2)