

Grantham College

Inspection report for further education college

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Inspector	Julian Parker
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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

Grantham College provides residential accommodation on campus in Sedgewick Hall and Sedgewick Mews. There is a very small amount of accommodation periodically arranged in local lodgings. At the time of the inspection there were 14 students under 18 living in Sedgewick Hall. The Mews and lodgings provide accommodation for students who are over 18.

Summary

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

This key announced inspection assessed the college's performance against the key national minimum standards (NMS) relevant to the national Every Child Matters outcomes.

The college provides resident students, who are aged under 18, exceptionally high standards of welfare support and ongoing improvements to their accommodation. Significant further development to college service areas that provide emotional and health related support, access to enrichment activities and the promotion of equality and diversity underpin the overall outstanding quality of the service provided to all learners.

No recommendations are made by this inspection.

Improvements since the last inspection

Since last being inspected the college has introduced improvements to its recruitment practice confirming that checks for newly appointed staff are robust and comprehensively recorded. This ensures that students are taught and looked after by adults confirmed as being both qualified and safe.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

The college actively encourages healthy lifestyles for all of its students and learners through its prominent information displays, hosting of health related promotions and in house sexual health provision. Appropriate first aid and minor illness treatment are available to students in college while registration with local mainstream GP surgeries provides direct access to National Health Services for all residential students.

Effective coordinated services are in place that identify and help manage any arising

mental health, welfare and personal problems. Students confirm by their active use of this service, and the associated on line resources, that it is meaningful and valued. Residential students say they feel well cared for by accommodation managers and support staff who ensure that they can quickly access the health care they need. These holistic arrangements ensure students health needs and personal problems receive sensitive treatment.

Students access very good quality catering provision having access to various on-site outlets. The college confirms its awareness of special dietary, medical and religious needs by making proper provision within its refectory and snack bar provision. The environmental health assessment of the college catering provision awards it a top five star achievement. In residence, students are encouraged to develop their own cooking skills by the provision of kitchens, resources and information that promotes healthy eating. Students following sporting curricular access lessons designed to enhance their aspiration to become athletes by promoting professional disciplines that include the importance of correct diet coupled with healthy living. International students confirm their appreciation of being able to access ingredients locally helping them to prepare and share with other student's cuisine from their home country.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Significantly improved child protection training and the formation of a safeguarding team of appropriately skilled staff, through whom concerns are channelled, strengthen the college systems for safeguarding students. Policy, procedure and practice is coordinated under a senior designated manager and this ensures a prompt response to any suspicion of abuse. Immediate on line referral systems directly to the local authority Initial Assessment Team assist the timely assessment and formal response to any issue of concern. This ensures that effective interagency liaison between the college and safeguarding services exist in practice.

All college staff demonstrate their thorough awareness of their protective responsibilities. Students confirm that they feel safe.

Students are effectively protected from bullying and harassment by the introduction of easily accessible, functional reporting systems such as the intranet 'Banish the Bully' and by effective staff responses tackling any form of discriminative or oppressive behaviour. The college message that this behaviour is not tolerated is embedded in its contractual expectations from students.

A fair and proportionate student disciplinary policy relating to unacceptable behaviour and breaches of student discipline operates within the college. Students, staff and parents receive a clear admission statement about expectations and codes of conduct through which very good standards of behaviour amongst all students are encouraged.

The college responds constructively to concerns and complaints from whatever

source. The accessible complaints system enables all parties to express their views, be aware of how concerns can be addressed and be informed of their outcome. Students know whom to talk with if they are worried about any aspect of college life. Personal privacy and confidentiality is fully respected.

Students are well protected from all safety hazards identified by an ongoing independently commissioned and in-house audit process addressing health and safety arrangements across all areas of the college including student accommodation. Fire and Rescue service visits and active Fire Risk assessment and management across the whole campus inform staff of the precautions and checks to take that keep students safe from the risk of fire. These arrangements effectively ensure the specific needs of residential students are protected.

An improved system for the selection and vetting of residential staff confirms that the recruitment of all residential and bank staff is in accordance with the national minimum standards. Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) and associated risk assessment confirm ongoing suitability of all residential staff for this responsibility. In practice, students are protected from unsupervised contact with adults or visitors who have not been subject to the college's complete recruitment checking procedures and by the availability of round the clock residential staff cover.

On-site security is good, balancing the needs of a busy college with the personal safety of students living on site. Residential houses are secure from external intrusion by the strategic use of Close Circuit Television (CCTV), electronic fobs and personal keys. Students say that their belongings remain safe because of these protective measures.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Resident students receive outstanding personal support from staff. Each student has access to a number of sensitive college staff whom he or she can confidently turn for guidance with any personal problems. In addition to the personal tutors and the staff who manage the residential provision, a range of professionals within the college focus upon the well-being of students and young adults. These include qualified professional counsellors, an effective academic and pastoral tutorial system, student support staff, an active innovative chaplaincy team, student sexual health advisors, extra-curricular enrichment and student union staff.

The college demonstrably respects difference in relation to gender, disability, race, religion, cultural background, sexual orientation and academic or sporting ability. Sensitivity to these factors is evident in all aspects of the care provided to students. A range of induction activities, awareness related events, clubs and interest groups support and promote integration into all aspects of college life enabling all residential students to feel accepted by not experiencing any discrimination.

Students access a broad range of meaningful enrichment activities that assist in their

personal recreational enjoyment, their understanding of social responsibility and involvement with their local community. College activities such as contributing to the food bank support charitable causes near to home alongside those raising awareness to help overseas aid.

Students say that they enjoy the relaxed atmosphere provided by living in the college while always having something they can do if they choose to. In this way boarding enables their ability to study and achieve.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Students are encouraged and enabled to contribute to and influence the operation of the college and its residential provision. Using a broad range of consultative meetings, feedback forms and on line tools students have an active say and make their views known directly to senior management or through their course representatives.

Staff respect students' views and positive feedback confirms the appreciation of their contribution.

The college promotes ongoing dialogue through good communication with families of all students, including those from overseas. Residential and support staff are sensitive to homesickness helping new students make friends, feel accepted and safe. Students receive practical help to retain private contact with their parents and friends using bespoke IT facilities and accessible phones.

New students confirm that they are well supported on arrival having received good accurate information about what to expect beforehand. There is an established and thorough induction process in place enabling staff to monitor individual progress and satisfaction through planned personal tutorials and inclusive in-residence activities. Residential support includes a clear focus on the holistic wellbeing of the young person by putting them at the centre of their practice.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is outstanding.

The organisation of residential provision proficiently safeguards students' welfare. Open communication and a student centred focus has improved outcomes for young people who may need help to settle and study. Both the physical environment and the level of staff supervision in place actively safeguard the wellbeing of resident students under 18. Accommodation with host families or in lodgings is unavailable for this age range.

Facilities within the residential house offers the choice of comfortably decorated and furnished single en-suite or double en-suite rooms influenced by choice and budget.

In many cases students enjoy being able to choose to share in this way with friends.

Students say that being in residence at college teaches them what it is like to be away from home and that the arrangements and facilities the college has in place helps support and prepare them for their eventual independence. One student wrote that that he felt more comfortable in placement because residential staff 'are helpful and do all they can to make sure students are happy and safe. They give good advice when students need it' thereby providing some of the security of being at home while being away with his friends.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

A concise statement of the principles of residential provision and student support provided by the college is made available to those needing this information in writing and through the college website. The college mission statement of 'Inspire, Empower, Achieve' concisely summarises how the service will be delivered.

The college's management team ensures regular monitoring of the records of risk assessments, sanctions against students, complaints and accidents, and identifies any issues requiring action. Active governance by the College Corporation promotes academic ambition, achievement for all and the further development of residence as a means to support individuals who cannot commute.

The promotion of equality and diversity is excellent as endorsed by the colleges achievement of the Investors in Diversity award and the many and varied positive messages displayed throughout the campus. Policy, procedure and driven practice, including a variety of awareness events, help students understand and celebrate the diversity of individual needs including race, ethnicity, disability, sexuality, gender, age and religion. Difference is accepted and the service is able to confidently integrate the diversity needs of its students and staff team in everyday life at college.

Staff follow clear residential practice and college policy, by working within a supportive well-organised team that strive to improve their service for young people. Staffing levels remain appropriate for the number and particular needs of the present student group bolstered by an identifiable contingent of trained bank staff being available to support any shortfall in the rota. Annual appraisals and staff training equip staff with the knowledge and skills necessary to provide a consistently high quality of safe care for resident students while recognising young peoples' appropriate desire for independence and self-determination. Residential staff say that they feel they have a valued role in the functioning of the college and enjoy the contribution they make helping students to achieve.