

Farleigh Further Education College (Frome)

Inspection report for further education college

Unique reference number	SC041633
Inspection date	29/02/2012
Inspector	Wendy Anderson
Type of inspection	Full

Setting address	Farleigh Sixth Form College, North Parade, FROME, Somerset, BA11 2AB
Telephone number	01373 475470
Email	colleenbenzie@priorygroup.com

© Crown copyright 2012

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.

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 to assess the effectiveness of the service and to consider how well it complies with the relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the inspection framework and the evaluation schedule for accommodation in further education colleges.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: a service that significantly exceeds minimum requirements

Good: a service that exceeds minimum requirements

Satisfactory: a service that only meets minimum requirements

Inadequate: a service that does not meet minimum requirements

Information about the college

Farleigh Further Education College (FFEC) is co-educational and provides further education for young people who have been diagnosed as having Asperger's syndrome.

The college accommodates young people from 16 to 21 years of age on entry, offering both day and residential provision. The boarders are accommodated in five different boarding houses, four of which are located in Frome. The fifth is in a nearby town. The college works in partnership with local further education colleges plus a range of work placements where students can gain work based skills and experience.

Summary report

Overall effectiveness of the provision	outstanding
Outcomes for young people	outstanding
Quality of service	outstanding
Leadership and management	outstanding
Safeguarding	outstanding

Overall effectiveness

The overall effectiveness is judged to be **outstanding**.

This college provides excellent provision for the students in their care. Students achieve very successful outcomes enhancing their life chances when they leave the college. For example by achieving places at university, full-time employment or other opportunities.

The staff team are incredibly committed to the students they work with and have high expectations for them. This links to the drive the team have for continually reviewing their own practice, pursuing further training to enhance and develop their skills, which in turn improves the service they provide. This ethos is encouraged and supported by an excellent senior management team.

The overriding impact of the college is the improvement in the progress the students make in their educational, personal, social and cultural development. Key to this are the excellent relationships that exist between the staff and the students, which enable the students to grow in confidence and independence. This is enhanced and

supported by robust assessment processes and superb individual plans to which all parties involved, especially the students, contribute. Consultation with students is fundamental to the colleges work and is seen as vital for the students to develop to adulthood

Respect, equal opportunities and anti discriminatory practice is evident throughout all of the college's work. The individual is recognised and praised, with respect being the keystone to this effective caring community.

The students' well-being and safety is viewed as paramount by all staff and is evident in the college's practice. This includes an outstanding risk assessments, recruitment procedure and staff training. The college also carries out excellent work with the students on developing their skills to keep themselves safe.

The residential provision is seen as an important part of college provision. This is very well managed and continues to improve both the facilities it provides and the services it can offer the students. The profile and importance of the work undertaken outside the education day is enhanced by the residential staff working within the educational aspect of the college with the students. This also ensures the effective flow of information across the campus. All systems within the college are robustly monitored by management. This ensures that the work undertaken not only meets, but frequently exceeds the national minimum standards.

Outcomes for young people

Outcomes for young people are **outstanding**.

The College has met all the minimum standards in this outcome area.

The college is an exceptionally inclusive environment in which individuals and differences are celebrated. This is summed up by a comment in the students guide, 'be unique'.

Students are proud of their college and their individual residences. They particularly like the move to more single rooms. The atmosphere in the residences is relaxed and comfortable. Students say it is like a second home, they can personalise their bedrooms and some say they were asked for their views on new furniture and the choice of colours for decorating. Students say they feel safe at the college and the residences.

Some students say that being at the college has given them a better understanding of themselves and their individual needs, but it has also given them a lot of hope for their future lives. They say the main areas are building their confidence, improving their independence skills and widening their social network. Some students have had the opportunity to experience a relationship for the first time. One student said they did not think they would ever have a girlfriend, now they have and the work they have done with the staff at the college has made this possible. They said they would not previously have had contact with members of the opposite sex or the confidence to approach them. Students are very positive about the staff who care for them, and say they are, 'brilliant, could not ask for better, they go out of their way for us, they are always there for you but not in you face 24/7'. One said, 'they do nag sometimes

but then we need it'.

Students have good access to doctors and they report staff to be very caring, looking after them very well if they are ill. Students who are able to administer their own medication say they think this is great. One said, 'I've not been trusted to do this in the past but I've got to learn and staff help me with this'. As a result the students are enabled to gain an important life skill and take responsibility for their own health care and needs. This in turn increases their self reliance and self confidence.

Students say the food ranges from OK to really excellent and there is always plenty to eat including fresh fruit in the residencies. Students enjoy good choices at meal times and menus which are varied. These menus meet the students' nutritional needs and, by incorporating the ideals of healthy eating, provide students with guidance for when they cater solely for themselves.

Students benefit from a good range of activities and they can put forward ideas for activities which, where possible, staff act upon. They access activities, groups and clubs within the local community, either individually or with fellow students. One student said that they had put forward an idea and then produced a poster to advertise it. The second time this activity ran, they were the one who did all the booking arrangements. This process helps students develop their organisation and communication skills. The student said they felt a real sense of achievement.

Students said that they felt well informed about the college prior to arrival and well supported on entry. This enabled them to settle more quickly in to college life. The information provided to students is very comprehensive and clearly written. When reviewing this information the college consulted with the students about what worked and what did not. This was then incorporated into the new edition.

Students said that bullying was not an issue at the college as it rarely happens. If it does the staff are really quick to sort it out. The college has a real sense of community which includes students caring for each other and supporting each other to raise any concerns with staff. Students said they felt that the college rules and sanctions were fair. There is open discussion with students about the consequences of their actions.

Parents report positively about their child's progress. One parent commented they could not believe the change in their child for the better and they said this was all down to the college. They also said that staff made them feel welcome on visits to the college and put them at ease, enabling them to fully take part in meetings.

Quality of service

The quality of the service is **outstanding**.

The college provides students with outstanding pastoral care which is supported by excellent recording systems. The college has met all the national minimum standards for this area. Individual health and personal problems are robustly assessed which

then leads to comprehensive support. There are in-depth individual plans, very detailed and frequently reviewed. Students receive excellent first aid and health care support from a well trained staff team. The college also enables students to safely administer or order and collect their own medication, developing independence skills. There are comprehensive records of any accidents, illnesses and medications. Each student has the appropriate consents for first aid and administration of medicines in place. A skilled therapy team ensures students who require additional support are identified and receive input either from the in-house team or external professionals

All young people at the college are vulnerable in differing ways and the service has strong protective measures in place to support this. Students in relationships with other students at the college have devised and follow a code of conduct based on respect for your partner and all others at the college. Additionally, there are groups which focus on all aspects of relationships. Staff respect students' privacy and this was observed throughout the inspection.

Students and parents have comprehensive information on all aspects of life at the college, which reflect the current practice. Students visit the college prior to admission, which enable staff to devise individual initial education and support plans from the outset.

The relationships between staff and students are exceptional. The team have an extensive in-depth knowledge of the students, including their abilities, skills and preferred method of learning. The staff team have well-developed expertise and understanding of Asperger's Syndrome and Autism. The staff team and management have been proactive at expanding their knowledge base to meet the changing needs of students over recent years. The staff team are extremely committed to the students and are creative in meeting their needs. For example, staff and students use texting to keep in touch; students inform staff of any concerns they may have about themselves or others and staff monitor students. Staff presence is not intrusive, but staffing levels ensure a high but discreet staffing presence to enable effective individual support to take place. The same staff work across residential and educational provision. There is excellent communication across the college regarding all aspects of the students' care so that there is a whole team approach to the wellbeing of each student, whilst still respecting their confidentiality.

Students enjoy an exceptionally wide range of age-appropriate activities during the week and on the alternate weekends they spend in college. These include activities both on the campus and in the community. These activities expand the students' social experiences, social skills and in some cases increase their social networks. There are robust risk assessments in place for all activities undertaken to ensure students' wellbeing is safeguarded. Students are able to contact their families at all reasonable times. The majority of students have mobile telephones and can contact family freely; they also have access to landline telephones.

The organisation of the student accommodation safeguards their welfare. The accommodation is furnished to a high standard. Students have access to an excellent range of safe internal and external communal areas. Communal areas in houses and

college are well furnished and maintained. They provide students with a homely, welcoming environment in which to live. There is currently a drive to reduce the number of shared bedrooms across the college campus. All students have lockable storage in the bedrooms. There are a number of student bedrooms with en-suite bathrooms. Within all the residences, there are ample bathing and toilet facilities, a number of which have recently been refurbished. Each residence has enough washing machines and tumble dryers to allow students to do their washing when they want to. This supports good progress towards independence. The main college has extensive grounds, which the students can use and all the residences have pleasant gardens. Students have excellent access to local shops and facilities, including staff support if this is required.

The food provided by the college ranges from satisfactory to exceptional. There is always a choice of meals, menus are varied, well-balanced and individual food needs are catered for. Students are involved in the preparation of group meals and self-cater for some meals, which develops their independence skills. The dining areas throughout the college are pleasantly furnished and decorated. Students have access to their kitchens at all times which have appropriate storage and facilities. There are supplies of water, snacks and fruit available throughout the day in all student areas.

Leadership and management

The leadership and management are **outstanding**.

The college has met all the national minimum standards for this outcome area. At the last inspection in February 2009, there were no shortfalls in standards. The college continues to review and develop its practice, policies and procedure to ensure students receive a very high standard of care. The college has a clear statement of principles and practice, which are evidenced in practice. Students are involved in the review of this information so that the college always improves what they provide for prospective new students.

The college has a robust complaints policy and procedure, which is rigorously followed. Clear evidence of this is contained within the excellent records of complaints. The ethos of the college is that the students are enabled and empowered to raise their concerns. Students and staff have a clear understanding of the complaints process.

The college has the appropriate policies and procedures in place regarding underage drinking, substance misuse and obscene materials. Staff and students have a good working knowledge of these and the consequence if they are breached. The college works proactively with the students on these issues, keeping students safe but also enabling students to exercise judgement for themselves as they move toward adulthood and independence.

Student consultation and involvement is a major strength of the college. Students are fully involved in all aspects of their care plans and the day-to-day running of the college. For example, the student council has been involved in reviewing college

policies and procedures. The majority of students felt the student council did an excellent job representing their views and getting students' ideas of implemented.

The college promotes and implements a clear anti-discriminatory stance which is evident in all aspects of the colleges work. All students are treated with dignity and respect, which influences how they learn to treat each other. The college has an equalities and diversity coordinator and group, which includes student members. Work is undertaken with the students on race, gender, people's rights and sexuality. Events are held which celebrate different cultures. The programme for this work is taken to the student's council for their input and views. The senior management is involved in actively trying to promote the college amongst the different ethnic groups in the South West.

There is a clear management structure at the college. The leadership of the residential side is excellent and fully integrated into the overall college leadership. Staff are very complimentary about the senior management team and the support they provide. Staff say that management truly operate an open door policy and that they would feel comfortable to approach them about anything.

Students receive exceptional support from the staff. All students have an allocated personal tutor which they regard as an important relationship for them. Thought is given to the allocation of personal tutors, ensuring good matches are made. Personal tutors hold one-to-one sessions with their students which involve in-depth work on their identified individual needs. The college undertakes regular reviews of the work they undertake. The results of these reviews are reflected in the college's future work. Staff see this as vital to ensure they are meeting the needs of the students. There are surveys about the accommodation, food, activities or future events. The staff team not only have high expectations for the students but also set very high standards for themselves.

All staff receive formal supervision termly, plus an annual appraisal. For new staff supervision is far more frequent, ensuring an effective induction and guiding new staff to work in accordance to Farleigh policies and ethos. The training provided for staff by the college is excellent covering a vast range of topics which has been extended to meet the changing needs of the students. The college has a high percentage of staff trained to National Vocational Qualification at level 3 or above. This high level of training ensures the staff team are kept enthused and up-to-date with current practice.

The college has extensive written guidance for staff on student welfare and practice. This is frequently reviewed and amended. There is a very strong culture of shared responsibility and the residential and educational staff share a cohesive understanding and approach to all aspects of student development.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding arrangements are **outstanding**

The students' safety is at the heart of all the college's work. All of the national minimum standards are met for this outcome area. The college has excellent policies and procedures, which are adhered to in practice to safeguard students. This is supported by a systematic staff training regime. The staff team's extensive understanding of the students and their inter-personal relationships enables them to intervene at an early stage if there are difficulties. The culture within the college is that bullying and harassment will not be tolerated and that all persons at the college have a responsibility and duty to report any incident or concerns. The college is also very alert in the area of cyber bullying via emails or mobile telephones. Excellent records for all aspects of safeguarding enable management to robustly monitor incidents and quickly identify any trends that require action.

There is a thorough child protection policy and procedure. All the staff, including housekeepers, maintenance and support staff receive regular mandatory training in this area. There are clear links to the local safeguarding children's board and social services. Any allegation or potential child protection issue is well documented and appropriate action taken. Staff recruitment policy and procedure is excellent and adhered to in practice. All visitors to the site have to sign in and out and are given a visitors identity badge. Any contractor on the college site is supervised.

Behaviour management at the college is excellent. The focus is on positive reinforcement of good behaviour and enabling the students to take responsibility for their own behaviours. Students are fully involved in the development of the sanctions including discussion with staff about specific responses in individual situations, so they are proportionate to their understanding of their own behaviour. Staff at the college have been trained in the use of physical restraint, but this is used only in exceptional circumstances. There is a robust system for recording restraint when it is used.

Fire safety is well managed and students know what to do in the event of a fire. All staff have received training in this area with a significant number, including all night staff, trained as fire marshals. Health and safety is well managed. There is a designated member of staff with overall health and safety responsibility and managers in each residence hold some responsibility. The college has two health and safety audits per year, one announced and one unannounced. There is an excellent risk assessment process, including individual risk assessment for students. Night staff who may work alone have been supplied with individual alarms which enhance the existing 'ring round' system. The main college is secure from intrusion whilst allowing young people to leave freely. The residential buildings have appropriate levels of normal domestic security which is enhanced with CCTV in certain areas.