

Askham Bryan College

Inspection report for further education college

Unique reference number	SC040955
Inspection date	18/03/2013
Inspector	Robert Curr / Lynne Busby
Type of inspection	Full

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Information about the college

Askham Bryan College offers a range of further and higher education courses, predominantly related to the land based industries, including animal care, horticultural and agricultural studies and engineering. The college has five additional non-residential centres and term-time accommodation is provided at both the York and Newton Rigg centres for students aged 16-18 years of age. Accommodation is situated in hostel blocks within the grounds. Each student has their own study bedroom, and some accommodation offers en suite bathroom facilities. The college provides a range of student support services, including a team of wardens who supervise residential students. Askham Bryan does not arrange off-site lodgings for students. The college was last inspected during January 2011.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: a service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements

Good: a service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements

Adequate: a service that only meets minimum requirements

Inadequate: a service that does not meet minimum requirements

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**.

The overall effectiveness of the college's residential provision for students is outstanding, with a number of notable strengths identified. The residential aspect of the college is very well managed and the governing body supports the senior management team to constantly drive improvements forward to ensure the students

have a positive experience.

Safeguarding arrangements are extremely robust and effective in keeping residential students safe. Safeguarding is paramount in the minds of all managers and staff. Excellent joint working with other professionals safeguards students at college and in the community.

The college provides excellent holistic support to students, with robust procedures to protect their welfare. The student services centre provides an experienced, competent and consistent staff team that promotes the students well-being.

Students receive services that positively promote their good health and well-being. This includes access to an array of health professionals and direct contact with a counsellor. Comments from students include, 'The college prepares you for independence,' and, 'it gives the freedom for you to live but with the support of a network of staff and friends if needed.'

There are excellent levels of student involvement and great emphasis is placed on inclusion throughout the college. The promotion of diversity ensures disability is never seen as a barrier to experiencing a full, enriching lifestyle.

There are significant strengths in all areas. All of the national minimum standards are either met or exceeded.

Outcomes for young people

Outcomes for young people are **outstanding**.

Outcomes for students in this college are outstanding. Students have exceptionally good relationships with staff and with each other. They learn to work co-operatively, developing empathy and understanding of each other's needs, disabilities and strengths. Students have enthusiasm for boarding and enjoy the opportunities available to them within the residential provision.

Residential students make excellent progress because of positive staff interaction and established routines of practical and work experience. Because of these experiences, they develop confidence in their social skills and become significantly more independent. Parents consistently say that their children have developed independence skills. Parents also say that their children have developed friendships with peers outside of the college, because of their increasing confidence. Feedback from parents includes: 'His independence has come on immensely and his confidence has grown,' and, 'our daughter cannot wait to get back to college after the holidays. She misses all her friends, including the staff.'

Residential students participate well in a wide range of activities and opportunities. Older students revel in the fact that they are learning to drive and engage in community-based activities in the local area. This gives them the opportunity to develop friendships with people they would not otherwise have met. Residential

students have a strong involvement in raising money for charity including international initiatives. Students say they recently participated in a 'tractor pull' event that was enjoyed by everyone involved.

Residential students readily take on responsibilities within the college. They volunteer to represent other student's views through the role of student ambassador and the students union. This enables them to make suggestions and express their views, affecting change within the college and residential provision.

Students develop an understanding of their own health needs. For example, some students say they have accessed and benefited from the excellent sexual health support services provided and are aware of the health benefits of physical activity. They have a strong sense of personal safety; they understand dangers in environments such as the college grounds. They are also well supported to understand dangers of internet-based activities and how to keep themselves safe.

Students receive dedicated, individualised guidance from career advisors that prepares them for moving on from college. They say they feel extremely well supported in making choices and being ready for their future in employment or continuing education.

Quality of service

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

The quality of service within the residential provision is outstanding. The 24-hour curriculum provides a seamless link between academic and pastoral care. There are highly effective systems in place to support excellent communication between the academic and care provision, enhancing individual potential for progress in all aspects of their development. Students are all extremely positive about the care and enrichment support provided. They say: 'It was a good decision to use this college; it is amazing how well I have done,' and: 'this is a happy place for me, the enrichment wardens are very approachable, informative and understanding.'

The induction process is sensitive to individual needs. Parents and prospective students visit the residential accommodation prior to commencement of boarding. They are able to meet key staff, familiarise themselves with both the college and the local environment and receive excellent written and verbal information from student representatives, college staff and external bodies, such as the police. There is a robust system in place to review the settling-in period for students, ensuring they are happy and are benefiting from the residential experience.

The college offers a vast range of activities, such as swimming, football, archery, martial arts and a multi-gym. The college is registered to run the Duke of Edinburgh Award. This offers students the opportunity to express their talents and support the community as a whole. Staff celebrate student's achievements, constantly reinforcing positive actions. Staff consistently use positive language, so that actions are instantly acknowledged; this helps to build individual's self-esteem and confidence.

Staff support students to develop team-working skills that help broaden their sense of community living and co-operation. Students take on responsibilities such as showing visitors around the college and taking on the role of student ambassador. These students support the enrichment team to supervise the welfare of students and are an additional channel of communication between students and wardens. Students learn negotiating skills through discussing options with the groups in residence. The exceptional role modelling by the enrichment staff helps to reinforce positive messages to the students. As a result, they work well together and accept each other's limitations.

The residential blocks provide accommodation for students that is of a high standard, which is extremely well maintained, and which fully supports their learning and their personal development. Residential students' health care is well managed. A qualified nurse provides a range of personal, social and health education. The quality of food is excellent. The meals provided are nutritious and offer students a choice, with healthy options always available.

Leadership and management

The leadership and management are **outstanding**.

The leadership and management of the college are outstanding. The dedicated staff team have high expectations of students, helping them to reach their full potential and develop their own aspirations. Everyday practice is underpinned by the aims set out in the prospectus. There is exceptionally strong promotion of equality and diversity, valuing individuals and ensuring they are not disadvantaged because of any disability. Staff advocate for students and encourage them to become confident in advocating for themselves.

Staffing arrangements are excellent, with enrichment wardens providing 24 hour support for students within the residential accommodation. The well-established and experienced staff team provide routines and boundaries that help students to feel safe. Enrichment wardens contribute greatly to the atmosphere within the residential blocks and it is clear that they thoroughly enjoy their work with the students. Staff receive good levels of training and supervision to support their professional development, which enhances their effectiveness in working with students. Excellent planning and recording ensures consistency in the delivery of pastoral support.

The monitoring of the quality of care is robust. The in-depth monitoring of student progress makes useful comparisons between progress within the college environment and progress made in residence. All records and incidents are monitored and evaluated. All required policies are in place and effectively implemented. They are reviewed regularly and changes are shared with the staff team. The Deputy Principal leads 'mock-inspections' using the national minimum standards, across the whole residential provision. Consequently, the college continues to improve in all areas.

Highly effective systems are in place to seek residential student's views of the quality of care. Systems include student surveys, student council meetings alongside individual and group discussions with the enrichment wardens. There is clear evidence to confirm that action has been taken on issues raised. This was raised as a recommendation at the last inspection and has been fully addressed. The staff team produce a poster entitled, 'What you asked...What we did.' Students state, 'We feel as though they listen to us and our opinions are valued.'

An independent counsellor is available to the residential students who say she is very approachable and supportive. Members of the governing body also spend time with students and tour the hostels to complete a picture of areas for development and giving them the opportunity to raise any issues. The complaints process is familiar to all of the students. Students are able to raise concerns and make suggestions. One student commented, 'You can talk to the student services team about anything.' This ensures that students feel valued and listened to.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding arrangements are **outstanding**

The safety of residential students is outstanding. Safeguarding is an absolute priority. Robust systems to report concerns, supported by regular staff training and auditing of safeguarding arrangements ensure that student's safety is promoted. Highly effective systems for monitoring the welfare of individual students are in place. Students report that they can contact the student services and enrichment team 24 hours a day. The local children's services safeguarding officer states that procedures are in place to ensure that protection matters are managed safely and effectively by the college. Representatives from the college attend meetings with external professionals, contributing to developing ways to support students and families.

Staff are subject to appropriate vetting and checks prior to working with students in the college. Precautions are taken to ensure that students are not at risk from visitors to the college and contractors. There is electronically controlled access to residential accommodation and a register of those present. Managers ensure that robust health and safety checks are in place. Regular fire evacuation practice and a good induction process ensure that students understand the procedure to follow in the event of a fire. Students are encouraged to take reasonable risks, proportionate to their age and stage of development, however, their safety is paramount.

Positive behaviour is expected and promoted. Bullying is not an issue and residential students say they feel extremely safe. Excellent activities take place in college to raise student's awareness of bullying, including cyber-bullying, and how this impacts on the victims. Staff work closely with young people to help them improve their behaviour and understand the consequences of unwanted behaviour. As a direct result, there is improvement in behaviour. For example, some residential students develop the ability to make and sustain friendships, which they have found difficult in the past. This builds their self-esteem and confidence.

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 the inspection of accommodation in further education colleges.