

New College Worcester

New College, 2 Whittington Road, WORCESTER, WR5 2JX

Inspection dates	17/05/2013 to 21/05/2013	
Overall effectiveness	Good	2
Outcomes for residential pupils	Outstanding	1
Quality of residential provision and care	Good	2
Residential pupils' safety	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management of the residential provision	Good	2

Summary of key findings

The residential provision is good because

- The college provides a specialist service that promotes each individual's strengths and abilities. Students' outcomes are outstanding because they are succeeding in their education and personal life. The college values students as individuals and their diverse identities; this uniqueness is celebrated in a way that promotes awareness and understanding.
- The holistic health needs of students are fully supported. Students benefit from a college where education, mobility, health and care are delivered as a seamless service. A key strength of the college is the independent living programme which is a key component of the student's life. Students' accommodation is good; improvements through the college's refurbishment programme are appreciated by students and staff alike.
- Safeguarding is outstanding. Students say they feel very safe and are safe. There is a comprehensive and thorough approach to providing a high profile to safeguarding. Partnership work is outstanding with a holistic approach across the college site, through excellent working relationships with parents and proactive links with external professionals and agencies.
- Leaders and managers are effective. Student's achievement, progress and well-being are at the centre of the work taking place at the college.
- All of the national minimum standards are met.

Compliance with the national minimum standards for residential special schools

The school meets the national minimum standards for residential special schools

Information about this inspection

This inspection was completed by two inspectors following a three hour notice period. Time was spent within the sixth form boarding hostel and house and three junior houses over two days and evenings. A range of records were examined related to the care provided and a lunch and evening meal observed. Discussions were held with members of the management team, nursing team, health and safety coordinator, designated child protection officer and a meeting attended which included members of the governing body and a team briefing. Three groups of students were met. Documentation completed at the school examined included health and safety and recruitment records, behaviour management records and other relevant documentation.

Inspection team

Martha Nethaway

Lead social care inspector

Dawn Bennett

Social care inspector

Full report

Information about this school

New College Worcester (NCW) is a non-maintained special school, providing education and care for students who are blind or partially sighted, within the 11 to 19 age range, who are able to access the National Curriculum and progress to study beyond 16. There are currently 86 students on roll, 40 female and 46 male. Approximately 17% of students are from a minority ethnic group. All current students are residential on a termly or weekly basis, apart from one day student. While all students have visual impairment, some also have additional needs, for example relating to hearing impairment or Asperger's Syndrome. Students stay in three residential houses (for young people in Year 7 to 11), and a sixth form hostel, and house. All residential accommodation is located on campus. The residential provision was last inspected in June 2012.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to consult with students regarding their feedback about the new catering arrangements.
- Review the layout of the physical restraint record.
- Review and develop guidance with regards to conflict of interest and what those potential risks might be.
- Devise a written record of quality assurance checks for medication undertaken by the health team.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for residential pupils

Outstanding

Outcomes for boarders are outstanding. Students are making outstanding progress in developing mobility, emotional resilience, independence and social skills. Students come to the college with a wide range of needs. For example, some have very limited hygiene and mobility skills. While others need specialist support with learning due to their visual impairment. All students experience a thorough, multi-disciplinary assessment prior to being accepted by the college. This is a child-centred process that ensures equality of opportunity and recognises strengths as well as identifying difficulties.

Students' support is excellent. Students quickly settle into the life of their house and the college. Induction is thorough and focuses on individual needs and team building. Students receive a warm welcome and very well supported to overcome any practical and emotional difficulties. Students quickly learn new skills by setting targets in areas they want to improve. They are then supported to achieve their targets by a team of professional staff. Targets are often linked to a main aim. For example, increasing mobility might support a student to learn a new routine in preparation for going to an activity, work or college placement.

Students are well prepared for leaving college and pursuing further and higher education or employment. Throughout their progression through college they continue to develop life and independence skills through a bronze, silver and gold award scheme. This is supported through education and in their residential houses.

The college is a highly inclusive environment. Young people make friends and build strong relationships. One young person stated, 'I have made true friends here who will stay my friends for the rest of my life.' Students support and reassure each other. As they progress through college they successfully take on additional responsibilities and learn to listen to and represent the views of others. For example, by becoming a representative on the school council or taking on a peer mentoring role. They become responsible role models for peers as well as excellent representatives of the college.

Students are actively involved in local and national issues and events. During the Olympics and Paralympics, college representatives joined choirs from across the region to perform at the local Olympic Torch event. Another group of students marched at a major event.

Students have established links with overseas schools for young people who are blind and visually impaired and are involved in regular exchange trips. They also participate in expeditions abroad with a local independent school. Last year students spent ten days trekking through remote villages, climbing mountains, camping and riding camels in a country along the Atlantic coast line. Students described their preparation for a trip abroad later this year. A student stated, 'We have been attending joint day and weekend fitness and learning sessions. The aim is for us to socialise, make friends and learn to operate as a team.'

Students enjoy the residential experience provided by the college. The social interaction of students is excellent. It is promoted through a wide range of new and stimulating activities. A student stated, 'My life opportunities have significantly increased by coming here. Since arriving this year I have been water skiing, participated in dance workshops which lead to a theatre performance and become a member of a local rowing club.' All students have access to a weekly programme of activities. These are influenced by students and organised by care staff and a team of activity coordinators. They include: swimming, archery, bush craft, tandem riding, judo, horse-riding and Goalball. These opportunities result in students gaining confidence with developing increased self-esteem and a sense of personal achievement.

Quality of residential provision and care

Good

The quality of the boarding provision is good. There are good resources and pastoral structures to support boarders' academic and personal progress. All staff engage and motivate students to achieve their personal best and make good progress relative to their starting point. The support from the pastoral staff and teaching staff is excellent.

Students enjoy a comfortable boarding environment. There is an on-going programme of improvement and refurbishment of the boarding facilities. For example, sixth form students accommodation has been significantly improved with new interior decoration, new kitchens and refurbishment of bathrooms and showers are planned. Equally, one of the junior houses has been refurbished. All this progressive work shows the college's commitment to improving and enhancing the boarding environment for the benefit of students.

Recreational and extra-curricular activities are well organised. Students enjoy immense opportunities. Students say that activities are interesting, fun and diverse. As a result, students develop well rounded confidence and avail of many positive opportunities to build self-resilience which is vital for students who are blind and visually impaired.

Student's participation and engagement are effectively supported. The college's student council is active and represents the voice of students and there are regular student council meetings. For example, influencing positive changes on the campus with the recent refurbishment and repainting of the coffer bar. Consequently, students' views make a positive difference.

Care planning and implementation is good. All students are provided with a care plan which are personalised to reflect students' needs and are now measuring impact and progress. New paperwork formats have been introduced and are being embedded by care staff.

Caring for students' health and well-being is good. All students have equal access to a small team of nursing staff and a visiting doctor who provides a weekly surgery. They provide direct medical support for students. Good arrangements are in place for the safe management of medication. Several improvements have taken place in the past year. For example, the college now has an external audit completed by a professional pharmacist. In addition, the nursing team carry out audits of care team's medication administration. However, this good practice is not documented. This is a missed opportunity to illustrate the on-going monitoring taking place.

Students' food catering arrangements are generally good. Since September 2012 the college has outsourced the catering arrangement to a new company. However, feedback from students is mixed, mainly related to the contrast of lunchtime and evening meals. In response to this the college has set up a food committee to help consult and improve communication between the college and the student body.

Residential pupils' safety

Outstanding

The safety of boarders is outstanding. The college recognises the paramount importance of the welfare, safety and education of students. All academic and care staff are alert to possible safeguarding issues and take positive action to provide a safe environment. This is underpinned by a thorough training programme, policies and procedures. In addition, procedures for recruitment are robust including addressing conditions of risk related to any conflict of interests. This strong practice is not evaluated in a policy document. Appropriate systems are in place to deal with allegations promptly and vigorously. All students identify that they feel safe and are safe. This is echoed by the responses from the Ofsted parental view questionnaires.

There is a positive and proactive approach taken to ensure a very safe environment for blind and visually impaired students exists. So for example, students know and understand how to use the safe zones in the college campus such as, the green, amber and red zones. One student commented, 'Access to red zone is not allowed.'

Students' behaviour is exemplary. They show consideration, thoughtfulness and respect for their peers and staff alike. The use of physical intervention is non-existent. However, the layout of the physical intervention record is to be reviewed. The college has recently introduced a reward system for younger students. One student commented, 'It is brilliant that the college now recognises students that are helpful and behave well throughout their college time. The incentives include gift vouchers.'

The college preforms very strongly in its approach to countering bullying which includes racism, homophobic and cyber bullying. For example, in the past year there has been a real drive to challenge and address any inappropriate homophobic language made by students. This proactive practice adopted by care staff is strong and confidently implemented.

The management of health and safety is comprehensive including fire safety. The maintenance team ensure that any damage or repairs are dealt with promptly. Risk management and documented risk assessments are completed for all aspects of the college campus and student life. For example, all students including new students learn the college campus mobility routes. New staff also take part in mobility training as part of their induction. All risk assessments for off campus activities are led by staff who are properly briefed and trained. As a result, the welfare of students is being actively promoted.

Leadership and management of the residential provision Good

The leadership and management of the boarding provision are good. The senior management team are unyielding in their commitment to providing outstanding outcomes and promoting safety at a high level for students. There are many strong examples of excellent practice. Care staff play their role in development and implementation of the college's Independent Living Skills programme. The partnership working between care staff, academic, pastoral, activities co-coordinator and the nursing team is a key strength that benefits students greatly. The college has made good use of independent visitor reports to improve provision and outcomes.

The college's quality assurance system is substantial. The forward thinking approach includes new quality measures so that the college is more effective in its culture of continuous improvement. Work is well underway to progress and embed models of best practice. As a result, the strengths and areas for improvements are benefiting the students.

The college meets its aim where blind and partially sighted students develop knowledge, skills and personal qualities they need to succeed in education, work and life. One parent commented about their daughter's progress, 'When she started NCW she was shy, had little confidence and limited independence. I would like to say thank you to you and your amazing staff for helping her to blossom into a confident and independent young lady who I am sure has a bright future ahead of her.'

The management and deployment of care staff is good. This promotes consistency and is a positive experience for students. Staff receive supervision and an annual appraisal. In addition, regular staff team meetings and briefings ensure that communication is enhanced. Staff benefit from a programme of good quality staff training as well as professional development. As a result, this helps staff to maintain their knowledge and competencies.

The management of record keeping is good. All students' records are well maintained and show the development and progress that they are making. Students are benefiting from meeting regularly with their key worker to discuss and review their individual targets.

Partnership working with parents is good. Care staff ensure that they are in contact with a parent at least every two weeks. There is a termly report from the college which comments on students' academic and residential progress. At the end of each term parents are invited to meet staff at college to discuss their child's progress with the tutor. All new students have a post induction meeting once they have settled into school life with the induction team.

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	A school which provides an exceptional quality of care and significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 2	Good	A school which provides a high quality of care that exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 3	Adequate	A school which meets minimum requirements but needs to improve the quality of care it provides.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A school where minimum requirements are not met and the quality of care has serious weaknesses.

School details

Unique reference number	117064
Social care unique reference number	SC043048
DfE registration number	885/7019

This inspection was carried out under the Children Act 1989, as amended by the Care Standards Act 2000, having regard to the national minimum standards for residential special schools.

Type of school	Non-Maintained Special School
Number of boarders on roll	85
Gender of boarders	Mixed
Age range of boarders	11 to 19
Headteacher	Ms Mardy Smith
Date of previous boarding inspection	14/06/2012
Telephone number	01905 763933
Email address	msmith@newcollegeworcester.co.uk

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