

Wiltshire College - Lackham

Inspection report for further education college

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Information about the college

Wiltshire College was founded in November 2000 when colleges in Chippenham, Trowbridge and Lackham merged. In January 2008 Salisbury College also joined the merger and was incorporated into Wiltshire College. The college was originally founded in 1946 as an agricultural college and operated as an agricultural college prior to the merger. It has a working farm which allows students hands-on experience of the rural economy. The college offers traditional land-based courses as well as an expanding range of further education and higher education courses in areas such as animal care, horticulture and motor sport. The campus provides accommodation to 54 students under 18 years of age and these students are the focus of this inspection. The residential provision at the College was last inspected in March 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	adequate
Outcomes for young people	outstanding
Quality of service	good
Leadership and management	adequate
Safeguarding	adequate

Overall effectiveness

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

Although the overall effectiveness judgement is adequate, the outcomes for residential students at the College are outstanding and the quality of service is good. The residential provision has made a positive impact on the quality of students' lives

and their future opportunities.

The recommendations from the last inspection have been met.

Students are cared for by a committed well trained staff team. College staff have high expectations for the students and enable them to achieve and in some cases exceed their goals. The residential provision provides students with added value in not only their educational achievement but also their personal development, self-management and social responsibility.

Equality and diversity is embedded throughout all aspects of College life. Individualism is celebrated and students are taught to value and respect this.

There are shortfalls in the areas of safeguarding, recruitment checks and fire safety which could potentially place students at risk. The residential accommodation is in need of refurbishment including the kitchens, bathrooms and toilets. Five National Minimum Standards are not met.

What should the college do to improve further?

To improve the quality and standards of care further the provider should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure the college has, and follows, an appropriate policy on protection of students under 18 from abuse and response to allegations or suspicions of abuse, which is consistent with the Local Area Child Protection Committee procedures. (NMS 3.1)
- ensure all staff, at all levels (including newly appointed and ancillary staff), have been given briefing or training on responding to suspicions or allegations of abuse and know what action they should take in response to such suspicions or allegations (NMS 3.6)
- ensure a fire detector is fitted to the students laundry room and catering staff receive training on fire procedures. (NMS 24)
- ensure written references , including the most recent employer, should be obtained before appointment and direct contact by the college should be made with each referee to verify references. (NMS 34.2)
- ensure student residential accommodation are appropriately lit, heated and ventilated, suitably furnished, adequately decorated, cleaned and maintained. In particular the College should accelerate the work it has prioritised in its improvement plans. This includes improving the toilets, washing facilities and kitchen facilities in the student's accommodation (NMS 36.1)

Outcomes for young people

Outcomes for young people are **outstanding**.

Overall outcomes for students are outstanding. The College is a highly inclusive community where exceptional relationships exist between the staff and students. These are based on mutual trust respect and honesty. Students feel well supported, safe and relaxed within the residential provision. Students said that they are treated as individuals and adults which they greatly appreciate.

Students stated that their feeling of safety at the College has been greatly enhanced by the new key fob system. This allows the College to set which areas of the College and residential provision each student can access. This has removed the signing in and out process as this is electronically logged by the fob system.

Students seize the opportunities provided by the College to excel and exceed their own expectations. They see the rules at the College as good guidelines for community living which they feel will help them in their future lives. This was seen during the inspection by the exceptional behaviour of the students which is indicative of the culture the College creates.

Students benefit from receiving outstanding pastoral care from a committed staff team which extends beyond learning and welfare. Students love the residential experience. During interviews they said 'it's like a big family', 'it's great fun', 'staff look after us really well and are very supportive'.

Staff are very passionate about the students growth and development and as a result students are better prepared for future prospects, employment and life. To enable students to do this they are able to take on roles and responsibilities. These include student advocacy, student wardens, student accommodation representatives and counsellors.

Students are enabled to lead healthy lifestyles and make good use of the College resources and external amenities to support them.

Quality of service

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

The quality of the service provided at the college is good. Students receive individual support from a dedicated residential staff team. The foundation of this support is the strong relationships the staff have with the students which enables staff to ensure that students individual needs are met. These relationships are based on mutual trust and respect with the residential staff providing positive role models for the students. Students are very complimentary about the staff who care for them with many saying 'it's the first time we have been treated like adults'.

This work is enhanced by the exceptional support and management of students sexual, emotional and physical health needs which are robustly met with the staff team being proactive in addressing these issues. There is a whole campus approach to the welfare of students the centre of which is the community campus programme

and counselling provision. The emotional wellbeing of the students is central to all work undertaken by the staff.

The College has a robust induction process which ensures each individual student is provided with all the relevant information they require. This coupled with the clear pre-admission and admission documentation prepares students well for life at the College and what the College expects from them. The process is non-judgemental and students said they found it very helpful. The College has a similar process when young people leave whether their move is to another education placement or to a job as they feel their commitment to their students does not end at the conclusion of their course.

Students are able to take part in an excellent range of age appropriate extra-curricular and leisure activities. The range of activities on offer is student led with regular consultation with students taking place to enhance this range even further. The students are involved in a number of projects and charities both in the local and wider community including charity work overseas. These are not only enjoyable but also build on the student's personal development.

There are a number of systems in place at the College to ensure students' views and opinions are represented across the entire campus. These include the student council, regular surveys of students as well as student's day to day contact with staff. Students have also been involved in the review and development of some of the policies at the College. Students provided numerous examples where their ideas and suggestion have been acted upon by the College which they feel has improved the quality of the provision. Students said they feel valued and that the College really listens to what they have to say.

Students are able to maintain good contact with their families and friends. Staff have built good relationships with students' parents. This is based on open communication and good availability of staff.

The College reported that the achievements of resident students are higher than those of non-residential students. Staff are very proactive in enabling students reach their potential and the residential provision enhances this. Students also supported this view.

There are appropriate facilities and services to meet the students' medical needs. A significant number of the staff team have received first aid training. All accidents are robustly recorded and reviewed so as to implement any lessons learned into future policy development. Students' health records are appropriate and confidentially is observed. Where required care plans are in place which are detailed and regularly reviewed to ensure they meet the student's current needs.

The organisation of the residential accommodation is good and enhances students' safety. Accommodation is arranged by age and gender. This means there are designated under 18's blocks and separate blocks for male and females. The only exception to this is where young people with disabilities are accommodated in a

block used by over 18s. This is because the block is purpose built and has disabled facilities which the older blocks do not. This arrangement is well managed by staff to ensure the young people's safety and well-being. Accommodation at the College is adequate. This is due for refurbishment. The College has implemented a fob system across the College campus including the accommodation blocks. This was developed with the students so as to enhance the security of the campus. Students reported that this system works well.

The kitchens in the accommodation blocks are very limited. Also the storage facilities for food range from adequate to poor. Some of the refrigerators are in poor condition. These could lead to food products being stored inappropriately and unsafely. The toilet and bathing facilities are also in need of improvement. The College has active plans for this work which has included consultation with students. This work was due to have taken place but other works have had to be prioritised.

There are several catering outlets across the campus, which provide a good range of meals and snacks for the students. Students interviewed were very happy with the catering provisions. The dietary requirements for individuals are robustly met.

Leadership and management

The leadership and management are **adequate**.

Students' wellbeing is given a high priority. The management of the residential provision is robust with staff and students being very positive about the head of residential accommodation services who they say is approachable, available and visible.

The residential staff team work well together and are very committed to the students they care for. They are consistent in their approach to the students' care which is linked to their robust communication not only within their team but with staff across the campus. This is especially evident with those staff who provide additional support to the students such as the community campus staff.

The staff receive a good standard of induction and on-going training which ensure the students receive care from a staff team who is consistent and whose practice reflects current guidance and legislation. This is supported by regular good quality supervision. The guidance that the College produces for staff on residential and welfare practice is of a very high quality. The exception to this is the immediate reporting of safeguarding issues to the Local Authority Safeguarding Officer prior to any investigation taking place.

Students receive exceptional personal support in all aspects of their life at the College. There is clear signposting of what help is available in college, which is extensive, and external support agencies. Staff work together across the campus to ensure students receive the help/input they need so they can reach and in some cases exceed their goals.

There is a comprehensive statement of the Colleges principles and practices. This is linked to the Colleges website. These provide prospective students with comprehensive information on not only what courses the College offers but also on the accommodation and pastoral care they provide. Students said they found this information very useful when making the decisions and choice of college.

The College has clear complaints policies and procedure which are adhered to in practice. Information from complaints both formal and informal are used to review and improve the Colleges practices.

Equality and diversity is evident throughout the Colleges ethos, policies, procedures and practice. Their anti-discriminatory approach is clearly evident within a predominately white British college. Staff feel to create a safe environment for the students they need to expand their understanding not only of their own culture but of other cultures. Within the campus community work there are a variety of support groups for students to access, ranging from sexual orientation to ethnicity. This enables the students to build their own support networks, which will assist them in life after College. The College also offers students guidance and support with substance related issues. This work is linked with the robust monitoring the staff do related to drink and drugs.

The College has a comprehensive crisis management policy which covers a wide range of events and is adhered to in practice.

There are many positive aspects regarding the leadership and management at the College but there has been a failure to identify and act upon the shortfalls detailed in the safeguarding section of this report. The College's own safeguarding procedures were not followed and a serious safeguarding incident was not reported to the local authority. The College investigated themselves but failed to appropriately report the matter so that other agencies were aware and could take action. In addition, the recruitment procedures are not adequately monitored to identify and remedy the inconsistencies in practice regarding the checks undertaken. These shortfalls have an impact on the judgement given in leadership and management and demonstrate insufficient rigour to keep students safe.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding arrangements are **adequate**

There are excellent systems in place for protecting students from bullying and/or harassment which are implements across the College campus. This includes a zero tolerance to bullying or harassment of any kind linked with a 'no blame' approach. The College is proactive in addressing these issues doing a significant amount of preventative work on unacceptable and inappropriate behaviours linked to making the students a positive member of the wider community. Students saw this approach as having a very positive effect on life in the College. One said 'it just makes you think before acting or saying something offensive'.

The College has the appropriate policies in place relating to safeguarding but these are not adhered to in practice. This includes the College not following the Local Safeguarding Children Board's procedures. This failings could leave students at risk and hinder the effective investigation of any safeguarding incident.

Staff interviewed did demonstrate a clear understanding of the principles of safeguarding practice in which they receive regular training. However the catering staff have not recently been involved in any safeguarding training. This could place these staff in a vulnerable position.

The College has an appropriate recruitment and vetting policy and procedure in place to ensure students are protected from unsuitable adults. This is not consistently adhered to in practice. For example, some recruitment files seen demonstrated a lack of evidence of references being verbally verified and one member of staff had no written references on file. These omissions could place students at risk. However, other files showed clear evidence of an excellent risk assessment which was adhered to in practice whilst the College awaited the arrival of a member of staff's disclosure and barring service (DBS) check being returned. The College ensures that all adults who live on site have either Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) or DBS checks. Both these practices protect students. Where external contractor are used the College tries to carry out this work outside of term time. If this is not possible they arrange with contractor to carry out DBS checks on their staff.

The College disciplinary policy and procedures are exemplary and are adhered to in practice. There is a holistic approach to behaviour management across the campus. This is detailed in the student's handbook which they are provided with prior to admission. Students said 'they treat us like adults, so we act like adults'. They felt the rules of the College were 'firm but fair' and 'just good rules for living together'. Appropriately records are maintained of all disciplinary incidents.

Staff supervision of students is well structured but not intrusive. Students were complimentary about the staff and said they always knew how to contact them. They particularly like the new pager system. This was implemented after consultation with the students. Within the staff team there is a good mix of gender and age. Students spoken too were all able to name a member of staff they would go to if they felt unhappy, stressed or just needed to talk.

The College has an excellent risk assessment and risk management process. Due to the nature of the Colleges work they are proactive in this area to ensure the students safety. Risk assessments are tailored to the individual students needs and the activities and course they are undertaking. This approach dramatically reduces the safety hazards around the College campus as well as protecting students from intruders.

The College has the appropriate policies and procedures in place relating to fire safety. The frequency of fire drills with the students exceeds what is required by the National Minimum Standards. All the required fire safety checks as carried out regularly. However there is no fire detector in the students' laundry room and

catering staff have not received any fire training. Fire training has been provided for the rest of the staff team. These omissions could place students and staff at risk.

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.