

# Myerscough College

Inspection report for further education college

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## Information about the college

Myerscough College is a specialist land-based college located near Preston in Lancashire. The main campus includes a farm, horticultural provision, ornamental gardens, sports centre, a golf academy, sports pitches, engineering workshops, motorsports and mechanisation facilities. The college provides 284 residential places for students aged 16-18 years across seven halls of residence. There were 260 students aged 16-18 years in residence at the time of the inspection. The college does not arrange any student lodgings with host families.

A previous inspection of the residential provision for students under 18 years was completed in May 2010. An additional visit to college was completed in November 2013. Recommendations from both visits are reviewed as part of this inspection.

### 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

<b>Overall effectiveness of the provision</b>	outstanding
Outcomes for young people	outstanding
Quality of service	outstanding
Leadership and management	outstanding
Safeguarding	good

## Overall effectiveness

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

The overall effectiveness of the college's residential provision for students aged 16-18 years is outstanding.

There are substantial strengths in the quality of provision and care for learners that make an exceptional impact on the quality of students' lives and promote opportunities for all to succeed in life. Of particular note are the inclusive measures for students with additional needs, which unequivocally demonstrate how the college embeds their approach towards equality and diversity. All aspects of planning and care practice are highly personalised to meet the individual needs of each young person in college, and this is finely tuned for this specific group helping them to gain an optimum level of independence within a fully integrated environment.

The safety and well-being of the resident learners is given very high priority within college, which means young people feel safe and well supported. While safeguarding practice is outstanding, certain details within the college's anti-bullying policy and internal investigative procedure are missing which means that the judgement for safeguarding is good.

All key national minimum standards are met. The college has positively addressed all of the recommendations from the previous welfare inspections, which has enhanced their student consultation programmes and their policy regarding the investigation of concerns. The on-going refurbishment of college accommodation is enhancing student accommodation and continued input into this area is recommended.

### **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):

- continue to implement the refurbishment programme within the halls of residence
- amend the anti-bullying policy to include a reference to situations where students are at risk of significant harm being dealt with under the college's safeguarding protocols
- amend the college's draft incident investigative procedure to reflect the fact that college staff do not investigate safeguarding concerns and must use the college's safeguarding protocols in such instances
- arrange opportunity for the lead Governor for Safeguarding to complete Local Safeguarding Children's Board's inter-agency training

### **Outcomes for young people**

Outcomes for young people are **outstanding**.

Outcomes for resident students at the college are outstanding.

Young people feel extremely valued and are proud to be students at the college. They feel readily able to express their individuality and in doing so, learn to accept

the individual needs of their peers. Young people from minority ethnic or cultural backgrounds, and those with specific additional needs consistently feel integrated into residential college life. This means that individuals treat others with respect and feel respected.

Young people and young adults benefit highly from living on site, this is indicated by cross college rates of retention, where rates for resident students are higher than their non-resident peers. This means that students are more likely to remain on their course and within education when resident within halls. The specific benefits for resident students aged from 16-18 are highlighted by a 4% increase in success rates when compared to their non-resident peers. In addition, resident students benefit significantly from social participation, as they readily take part in the varied activity programme and gain new networks of friends who help them in their study programmes. These social opportunities for resident students are greatly enhanced by college's clear insight and improvements within this aspect of college life, gathered through their self initiated research in this area. Therefore, students are benefitting hugely both academically and socially from living in residence.

The academic and social benefits are felt particularly keenly by those students with additional needs, a number of which are living a good distance from their family home. They greatly value the respect of being educated within a fully integrated setting. Their support needs are sensitively and unobtrusively met, which helps them feel equal to their peers and able to work towards their personal goals and beyond.

Students' residential life prepares them extremely well for employment after their studies, with increased employment opportunities for ex-residents compared to their non-resident peers. The students readily take up additional group and committee roles within college, which greatly enhances their skills and contributes well to life on campus. For example the 'MyMentor' scheme is consistently provided by trained second year students and extremely well utilised by new students to help them within their college induction and to build invaluable friendships and college links. This makes new students quickly feel a part of college life and helps reduce their anxieties.

The student group respect and value their place in the local community and initiate and complete a large number of community based projects as part of their contribution to the local neighbourhood. The acclaimed sporting facilities on site are well utilised by visiting community groups and sport teams. Students work very hard alongside staff to keep their sports, learning and living environments highly usable and accessible places. This means that the extensive grounds and facilities within college are damage free and well used.

## **Quality of service**

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

The quality of residential provision is outstanding. The residential service is a highly dynamic part of the study programme for 16-18 year olds.

Residential accommodation is of a high standard and an on-going refurbishment programme, already firmly in place, continues to enhance the standards provided. This means that students can readily relax and feel very comfortable in both their private and communal space. Resident students have benefitted from the additional security provided within halls since the last inspection in May 2010, with the provision of pass fobs and CCTV to monitor and track access and egress from the halls of residence. Students understand and appreciate these security measures and confirm that it helps them feel safe on campus.

Qualified nursing staff provide a well used, highly effective clinical service at the college. This service successfully promotes health care programmes with individuals, such as smoking cessation, sexual health and minor injury care. College positively promotes each student's smooth access to primary health care, via well managed networks with health professionals. This means resident students receive exemplary pharmacy provision and consistent access to a primary healthcare practice.

Emotional well-being is extremely well promoted through unobtrusive access to counsellors and student support officers. Highly cohesive communication between the student group, their personal tutors and student support services means that students can and do self-refer via the college walk in 'core' facility or are referred by staff. This effective referral system is extremely well supported by the college Student Support Register system, which records referral rates, support uptake rates and programme completion data. The system provides a clear and detailed record of personal concerns which students and their allocated support staff use well, to ensure that individuals consistently receive the emotional support they need to develop.

The inclusive packages of care for identified students with additional needs provide a comprehensive individual learning plan for this group. Individuals and their families contribute well towards this plan, and student support staff and wardens use the information really well to provide the best support for this group of learners. This means that this group match their peers with their own personal goals and are empowered to share and progress towards their aspirations for their future development.

There are a broad variety of eating facilities at the college, which are well used by students, and provide a good choice of nourishing food. Suitable self catering facilities are also provided within the halls and there is a shop where reasonably priced food items can be purchased. Students take good advantage of these facilities to prepare their own snacks and alternative meals.

The extremely broad and varied on and off-site activity programme has begun to be

enhanced by the effective work of the college's new sports maker. Charitable and community fund-raising is an important part of student life and promotes the college's well developed community participation programmes. The fund-raising programmes enable individuals to take on leadership roles and to develop their team working abilities alongside their peers, college staff, community volunteers and partners. For example a screening programme for Cardiac Risk in the Young has promoted a college partnership with the associated charity and the college student body has made a charitable donation to the cause.

Communication facilities for the student group have been greatly enhanced with the provision of an enhanced broadband network across campus. This has improved access and quality for each student's chosen means of contact with friends and family.

### **Leadership and management**

The leadership and management are **outstanding**.

Leadership and management are outstanding.

The residential provision benefits greatly from the cohesive work of the college's residential leadership team, the governing body, and student representative bodies. All parties work consistently, under sound college management, to promote student aspirations and to provide personalised programmes to help individuals meet their goals. This culminates in a cross college culture of drive and development for all. There is a highly insightful approach to self assessment and the college works hard to maintain standards and initiates developmental areas to improve their practice. For example, the 'you said we did' initiative, invites and recognises the strong student voice contribution and reports back on developments initiated through the programme. This means resident students feel well listened too and are well prepared to effectively contribute to various decision making bodies such as the governing body.

Warden and student support staff are very well deployed to consistently meet the needs of the resident population. Recent proposed staffing changes will alter the nature of the warden role to that of a residential support officer role, these changes will enhance the number of support staff deployed in the evening to manage busy times in the college day. These developments are positive additions to the established resident warden presence in each hall, and help manage any nocturnal disruption for students.

Student support staff provide a highly active and accessible service for students via the 'core' facility. Student support staff are highly trained in areas acutely relevant to the student population, such as self harm, domestic violence and child sexual exploitation. The support staff use their training and expertise well as young people find them approachable and sensitive to their personal needs and concerns. Clear and secure records of needs and most appropriate support systems are provided by the student support register and individual learning plans. This means that students

are clear about what happened to their concern and all relevant staff, both tutors and support staff, know what further action is planned.

Induction training for warden and student support staff is clear and consistently received by new staff. The number of long established staff members in the college is very high, which creates a positive permanence within the provision. All staff receive a well organised continuous professional development programme which refreshes their skill base and prepares them well for working with the students.

Communication with parents is excellent with 97% responding to say they can easily make contact with the college regarding their child. Complaints are taken very seriously and managed effectively. The revised procedure for complaint investigation has been reported upon under the safeguarding section and a point for improvement has been raised in relation to this area.

There are highly vigilant measures in place to counter substance misuse and under-age alcohol consumption among the student population. These include police searches for substances and identity checks in the college shop and student bar. These have proved successful as the occurrence of both risks are very low and students clearly understand and are very aware that the zero tolerance approach is consistently maintained.

All key national minimum standards within this area are fully met. The college has positively addressed all of the recommendations from the previous welfare inspections, which has enhanced their student consultation programmes and their policy regarding the investigation of concerns.

## **Safeguarding**

Safeguarding arrangements are **good**

The college's safeguarding arrangements are good. Student safety is at the heart of all the colleges work and all of the national minimum standards are met for this outcome area. Practice within this area is very positive and staff are following college and statutory referring protocols, however, the slight gaps within the college's policy and procedure documents outlined below, mean that this area is judged as good.

Residential students say they feel safe living on campus. They understand and appreciate the college's rules and most students say they are fair. Matters of discipline are managed proportionately. 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 a duty to report any incidents or concern. At the point of admission to the college, students are provided with, and make good use of, lots of information about the college rules, how they can raise their concerns and the support that is available to them. This includes student mentors, college warden staff, personal tutors and a dedicated student support team. Students said that bullying does happen but when it is reported they say staff deal with it effectively.



Staff practice is underpinned by the college's anti-bullying and harassment policy. Generally, this policy is detailed and provides good information staff can use to inform their responses to incidents of bullying and harassment. However, this document does not reflect that bullying could be a safeguarding concern, therefore the different processes for episodes involving significant harm are not sufficiently explained. Student welfare is not compromised because of this recording shortfall, as staff and students are clear on the threshold of significant harm. Additional evidence from the local authority's safeguarding board representative and records of internal and external safeguarding referrals, also demonstrate that the threshold of significant harm is established and suitably acted upon.

The college has good policies and procedures which are adhered to in practice to safeguard students. The college's draft investigative procedure for serious incidents is clear, however, it does not instruct staff that they must not investigate any safeguarding concerns, but must refer them to the designated senior person responsible for safeguarding. Although this has not impacted directly on practice, and staff are clear that they don't investigate safeguarding concerns, this is not explicit within the written procedure.

The arrangements for safeguarding students are very well managed. Monitoring of all aspects of student safety is extremely good and there is a strong commitment to strengthening procedures and staff practice. Governors and managers frequently assess and review practice and when shortfalls are identified they introduce robust strategies to address them. This has included raising staff and student awareness, formalising reporting processes and strengthening links with external safeguarding agencies and professionals. For example, a representative from the local safeguarding children's board said, 'When the college has a safeguarding concern, they will always seek advice appropriately.' This ensures allegations and child protection concerns are managed effectively, with transparency and in the student's best interests.

The rigorous recruitment procedure ensures that all staff are appropriately vetted and are suitable to work in an educational setting that caters for a diverse population, including vulnerable groups. Staff who live on the college campus and regular contract staff are subject to Disclosure and Barring Service checks. All visitors must report and sign in and are required to wear their identification at all times. Security around the residential accommodation is good and admission into residential halls is restricted to individuals with the requisite electronic fob. Security is further enhanced with CCTV which is placed at the entrance of each residential unit. These arrangements help protect students from people who may pose a risk to them without invading their privacy.

Student's health and safety is promoted very well with a systematic approach to assessing risks and taking swift action to ensure the college and residential accommodation is safe. Key staff are responsible for the continuous monitoring of health and safety to minimise risk to students and staff. Students are protected in college from the risk of fire by a range of effective safety precautions. Regular fire

evacuations take place and fire equipment is checked and serviced in line with necessary requirements. There are extensive and robust risk assessments covering all activities on and off campus. These are regularly reviewed to make sure they are effective.

Staff are extremely proactive and closely monitor the well-being of students. They have an extensive knowledge of the risks and vulnerabilities students face when living away from home. This enables them to identify and respond to concerns quickly. They clearly take their safeguarding responsibilities very seriously and demonstrate strong commitments to ensuring students are provided with excellent support, advice and guidance about how to keep themselves and others safe. For example, all students will have the opportunity to complete accredited safeguarding training, which has recently been introduced into the college curriculum. Students who have completed this training commented positively saying it had helped raise their awareness of how to keep themselves safe, their responsibility to others and how to raise concerns if necessary.

All staff are trained in safeguarding. A number of staff with specific safeguarding responsibilities have undertaken the local authority designated person training in safeguarding. However, the college governor responsible for safeguarding has recently changed and the post holder has yet to complete this training.

## 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.