

Easton & Otley College

Further education college residential provision

Inspection dates		27/09/2016–29/09/2016
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Good
	Previous inspection:	Good
Outcomes for students		Good
Quality of service		Good
Safeguarding		Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Good

Summary of key findings

This college is good because:

- Leadership and management are strong. The management team has good oversight of what goes on. It understands the strengths and weaknesses, and focuses on continually improving students' residential experience.
- The safety of students is a priority at this college. Staff training and work in safeguarding help to protect the students. Students feel safe in the college buildings and grounds, and feel protected and supported by the college staff.
- Staff respect students as individuals. There is promotion of equality and diversity, so that students are prepared to live and work in diverse communities.

This is not yet an outstanding college because:

- The college does not yet significantly exceed the majority of national minimum standards.
- The quality of residential provision, safeguarding, management and support is good, but not yet exceptional.

Full report

What does the college need to do to improve further?

- Consider extending the range of structured activities available to residential students at weekends.
- Continue to extend the provision of lockable secure storage in students' bedrooms, as an alternative to lockers in the college.
- Consider arranging for a governor to have specific oversight of the residential service and ensure annual visits to the residential accommodation.
- Consider making the compliments and complaints procedure more explicit on the college website.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for students	Good
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- Students find that staying in the residential accommodation expands their friendship groups, as they meet students from other courses. One said, 'It's good to have friends on my course and make friends from different courses – wouldn't happen if I wasn't staying here.'
- Some students say that the best thing for them about being resident is 'having friends and the wardens to talk to'. Others appreciate not having to travel considerable distances to reach college, as they can make better use of their time to study, socialise and use the facilities.
- Positive relationships with residential staff help students to feel secure. They feel confident about approaching them with any concerns. A professional stated that staff have a 'protective and nurturing approach to the students – they are not isolated and alone'.
- Students contribute to what happens in the residential accommodation. They give their views on activities, catering, the accommodation and other everyday matters. Student representatives advocate on behalf of other students on the student council.
- Students feel that they are well prepared for the next stage of their lives, whether that is employment or further study. Parents find that their children become more independent as a result of living in the residential accommodation. One said that their child now has 'more friends, more independence, better study and more confidence'.
- Students in the residential accommodation make better progress from their starting points than non-residential students, and retention rates are better. They are well prepared for higher education, employment and adult life, including possibly living and working in more diverse areas of Britain. Students gain confidence and valuable skills through their work experience placements. Some make the most of opportunities for paid work in the college's catering department, which helps their financial independence.

- Students participate in keeping themselves healthy. They access support for their emotional and mental health, make use of the sports facilities and eat a varied diet. Some feel that there is room for improvement in the quality and range of food available at some meals, but acknowledge that they have opportunities to give feedback on this and effect change.

Quality of service	Good
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- Relationships between staff and students are a strength of college life. The residential staff are concerned for students' welfare. They take their work seriously and want students to enjoy their residential experience. They provide good pastoral support and make sure that students can access a range of support services that can help them.
- Staff give prominence to mental health. They recognise students' particular vulnerabilities, as well as the high risk of mental health problems in those working in agriculture. Tutors, student support staff and residential staff ensure a holistic approach to identifying those who may have mental/emotional health problems and encouraging them to seek help. A professional said that the college 'deals well with mental and emotional health'.
- Students settle into residential life with an improved induction. One said that they had a 'really good induction. Got a pack of stuff, too. Love the dressing gowns!' Some feel that further information would be useful. This may be more a matter of going over things again with new students, who have a great deal to take in.
- Students like their accommodation and find that it suits their needs. Staff respect their privacy. Good measures are in place to keep students safe and secure. An online system to report maintenance issues is in place. This will allow staff to monitor repairs and ensure their completion in a timely manner.
- Students find that there is a good range of activities, with one saying, 'Activities are great!' Some students like using the extensive sport facilities in their free time. Trips out are arranged regularly. A few students find that there can be fewer structured activities at weekends.
- Arrangements to promote students' health are good. Students receive first aid and healthcare, as necessary. All are registered with a local general practitioner. Menus are varied and cater for any of their religious, cultural or dietary needs.
- Students have experienced disruption when a few staff left, but describe a more settled period now. Students benefit from staff who are experienced in work in other areas of the college, and some who have worked at the college for a number of years. Some staff say that they find working in residential 'friendly', with 'a nice team which has a community spirit and friendly feel to it'. Staff receive sufficient training and guidance to help them in their work supporting students.

Safeguarding

Good

- Students say that they feel safe in the residential accommodation and the college grounds. They understand that they must sign in and out of the premises so that staff can track their whereabouts. The college does not have a problem with students going missing.
- Students' behaviour is generally good. Positive behaviour is encouraged. Staff understand that sometimes behaviour is 'just about being a teenager', with all the stresses and anxiety that this brings. Staff treat students with respect. They do not restrain or sanction students, but apply de-escalation techniques and a fair disciplinary process, if necessary. One student said, 'Staff treat us with respect and like adults. They talk to us if there is anything that we're doing wrong.'
- Students do not identify bullying as an issue. They are confident that staff would take timely action to deal with any incidents. They feel that students are respected for their differences and do not suffer prejudice, such as homophobia or sexism.
- The physical environment is safe. Wardens live on site and are easily available to students. Accommodation is secure. Students are fully aware of the college's zero tolerance approach to drug and alcohol misuse. They receive clear guidance on how to keep themselves safe from such risks. Staff work closely with other agencies, such as the police, to reduce the risk of drug abuse.
- Staff's awareness of safeguarding is good. They maintain their skills through training and know how to refer any safeguarding concerns. They have up-to-date knowledge of concerns such as extremism, sexual exploitation and cyber bullying.
- A very strong system of risk assessment protects students. They are involved in fire safety and precautions, so they know what to do in the event of a fire. Thorough risk assessments protect students during high-risk activities, for example participating in the Three Peaks Challenge.
- Staff find that the new electronic recording systems encourage better contemporaneous information sharing. This ensures that all staff have up-to-date information about matters concerning individual students.
- The governor with responsibility for safeguarding has some oversight of residential safeguarding matters. However, the college does not have a governor with specific oversight of the residential accommodation. Although governors do tour the premises, it is not clear if they visit the residential accommodation periodically.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The residential accommodation is well led and managed. As a result, staff have a clear focus on providing a good residential experience for students. Staff show enthusiasm for promoting and protecting the welfare of students.
- Student records are clear and help staff to support the students. Good communication between residential, teaching, student services staff and parents benefits the students.
- Managers identify any weaknesses and seek to improve the quality of service. For example, a review of the residential accommodation in June 2016 looked to improve the residential experience, raise standards and ensure that the provision meets national minimum standards.
- Residential staff are well supported and supervised. Their training equips them with the skills that they need to work with students and keeps them up to date with current themes, for example, promoting British values and the 'Prevent' agenda.
- Sufficient staffing levels ensure that students receive appropriate supervision. Students appreciate that they may approach the staff at any time for a chat, outside of their planned one-to-one meetings. They enjoy the company of residential staff.
- There is an inclusive approach. The residential staff ensure that they accommodate students' individual differences. Students are encouraged to have high aspirations, for example, with staff support, to complete university applications and to gain relevant work experience.
- Students receive information on how to complain, although it is difficult to find this on the college website. Rates of complaints are low and students' satisfaction with the residential provision and experience is positive.

COLLEGE DETAILS

Type of college	Further education college residential provision
Age range of students	16–18
Approximate number of students in residence	99
Principal/CEO	David Henley
Date of previous inspection	25/03/2014
Website address	www.eastonotley.ac.uk

Purpose and scope of 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.

Contextual information

Easton & Otley College is a land-based further education college situated in a rural area close to the city of Norwich in Norfolk. The college offers a wide range of vocational and academic courses. The college currently caters for 99 residential students, with 66 of these below the age of 18. The college provides residential accommodation on site only.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector	Jacqueline Graves SCRI
	Patrick Sullivan RIM

Jackie Graves (SCRI) and Patrick Sullivan (RIM) carried out the inspection at short notice.

Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors also used data on students' achievements over the last three years to help them make judgements. Inspectors used group and individual interviews and telephone calls to gather the views of students; these views are reflected throughout the report.

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the 'Evaluation schedule for inspection of residential provision in further education colleges 2014'

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/evaluation-schedule-for-inspection-of-residential-provision-further-education-colleges>

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