

North Shropshire College

Further education college residential provision

Inspection dates		01/11/2016–03/11/2016
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Inadequate
	Previous inspection:	Good
Outcomes for learners		Requires improvement
Quality of service		Inadequate
Safeguarding		Inadequate
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Inadequate

Summary of key findings

This college is inadequate because:

- The arrangements for safeguarding are ineffective. Governors, leaders and managers have not ensured that the college meets its responsibilities in relation to 'Working together to safeguard children' and 'Keeping children safe in education'. Governors, leaders and managers have not tackled areas of weakness in safeguarding which inspectors had previously identified in the college's Ofsted education inspection in January 2016 and its Ofsted nursery inspection in September 2016.
- Governors, leaders and managers are not identifying or tackling systemic shortfalls in college processes to recruit and vet staff. Some departments and staff teams are making progress in addressing shortfalls and driving change. Other departments are not moving forward with any sense of urgency or rigour.
- Procedures and arrangements for the safe recruitment and vetting of staff do not meet the national minimum standards. They fail to ensure that appropriate staff are employed to promote the welfare and safety of residential learners. This places learners at risk of potential harm.
- Records of disciplinary measures against residential learners are not detailed enough to give managers a clear understanding of staff practice.
- The central record of sanctions imposed upon learners is not up to date. Managers do not have a clear overview of incidents to enable them to safeguard learners and ensure appropriate staff practice.

- Induction and training of residential staff are in place, but lack sufficient rigour and structure to ensure that a consistently high standard of practice is maintained to meet the changing needs of residential learners.
- Residential learners aged 16 to 18 perform poorly in functional skills. Similarly, too few learners achieve an A* to C grade in GCSE mathematics and English.
- Leaders and managers do not have a clear overview of the outcomes for residential learners. As a result, they are unable to evaluate accurately their progress and/or put in place precise actions to improve it.

This college has the following strengths:

- Residential learners value the residential experience.
- Educational attendance and outcomes for some residential learners are higher than for day learners.
- Staff know the residential learners very well and provide good individual emotional support which helps young people to develop confidence and self-esteem.
- The views of learners and parents are positive. Staff and managers act on matters that they raise, whenever appropriate. As a result, learners and parents feel consulted and listened to.
- Residential staff are well supported by their direct manager to enable them to meet the needs of learners.

Full report

Compliance with the national minimum standards for Accommodation of Learners under 18 by Further Education Colleges

- Ensure that the college's system for recruiting staff (including ancillary staff, contract/sessional staff and volunteers) who will work with learners under 18 includes all the following before appointment, which can be verified from recruitment records:
 - disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks, at the highest available level, with a written record demonstrating that these checks have been done with a satisfactory outcome;
 - written references, including the most recent employer, with a reference request letter that specifically asks all referees to state any known reason why the person should not be employed to work with young people and that there should be no material mis-statement or omission relevant to the suitability of the applicant;
 - direct contact by the college with each referee to verify the reference;
 - contact by the college with each previous employer where the candidate was involved in work with children, young people or vulnerable adults to check the reasons why the employment ended. (NMS 34.2)
- Ensure that staff members (and others) subject to the requirements set out in 34.2 do not begin work (or residence) at the further education college until the satisfactory completion of all checks and receipt of references. Exceptionally, a member of staff may begin work if some references/checks are outstanding, but all DBS checks must have been completed. In such cases, there must be evidence that every effort has been made to chase the checks and references, and the person must be supervised so that they do not have substantial unsupervised access to residential learners under 18. (NMS 34.5)
- Ensure that a central record is kept of the administration of any significant sanction against a student, giving the name of the student concerned, the reason for the sanction and the responsible member of staff. (NMS 4.8)
- Ensure that newly appointed staff with responsibilities for supervision of residential learners or the provision of student welfare services have an appropriate induction training programme in supervising, and in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of, residential learners. (NMS 30.5)
- Ensure that the college provides opportunities for training in and updating of residential and student welfare practice for all its staff with responsibility for the supervision of residential learners or the provision of learners' welfare services, which includes such opportunities for both recently appointed and experienced staff. (NMS 30.10)
- Ensure that there is clear management accountability for the accommodation and welfare of learners under 18. (NMS 8.1)
- Ensure that the college corporation or other governing body makes appropriate resource provision for the maintenance and development of both accommodation and student welfare services. (NMS 8.3)

What does the college need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the college's staff recruitment and vetting procedure covers all the elements of national minimum standard 34.
- Ensure that records of inappropriate behaviour and any resulting conversations, actions and parent involvement are clearly recorded.
- Ensure that residential learners achieve their educational targets in GCSE English, mathematics and functional skills.
- Ensure that aspirational residential targets are set for learners so that they are able to develop the skills necessary for their future adult life.
- Ensure that the staff record residential learners' progress and successes.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners

Requires improvement

- Outcomes for learners require improvement. Too many residential learners in the past academic year failed to perform well in functional skills and failed to achieve mathematics or English GCSE A* to C grade. In other areas, residential learners' education attendance and outcomes are good and better than for day learners.
- Residential staff do not use systems for target setting well enough to ensure that residential learners make good progress relative to their prior attainment. Expectations of residential learners are too low. Written records do not provide sufficient detail to enable effective monitoring and improvement of learners' progress.
- Residential learners enjoy the residential experience. Learners are well supported to develop personally, which results in increased confidence and self-esteem. They develop good social skills and awareness of communal living and independence. They learn to compromise and get on well with others from different backgrounds. As a result, they are well prepared for their next steps into further study or employment.
- Residential learners are encouraged to take responsibility for their own health and fitness. They enjoy participating in a variety of physical sporting activities to keep fit. They are particularly positive about the new gym that has been equipped for their use in the evenings and at weekends.
- Residential learners feel that they are consulted and able to make a contribution to the residential provision. They have a strong sense of trust in the residential staff. They firmly believe that staff listen to them, and understand and respond to their views and ideas. They value how they are asked about meals and choose where they would like to go on trips. Visits to firework shows and ice skating are the result of learners' choice.
- Residential learners are well prepared for further education and adult life. They are very well informed about the operation of the college and the opportunities available to them. They and their parents are clearly able to influence service development, for example the evening meal is now included in the residential fee.

Quality of service

Inadequate

- Governors and leaders fail in their duty to safeguard adequately the welfare of residential learners in their care, because staff without appropriate recruitment and vetting checks are working with learners.
- Residential staff are not recording progress or residential learners' successes outside of one-to-one sessions. As a result of this lack of overview of their progress, learners do not reach their full potential.
- Residential staff know the learners well. They have established positive relationships which they use appropriately to guide and influence learners to make well-informed choices and decisions.
- Residential learners enjoy a range of activities such as the Young Farmers' Club, organised trips and sports. This encourages social and personal development.
- The induction of residential learners is reviewed and developed each year, based on feedback from learners and parents. Events organised throughout the first week help learners to get to know each other as well as the college's systems. Parents were for the first time formally involved in the first day of the induction this year. Residential staff have subsequently remained in contact by regular phone calls. These more proactive lines of communication were promoted by last year's parental feedback. Questionnaires have been sent out at the end of the first half term, this year, to gauge if parents feel that communication has improved.
- The organisation of residential accommodation has been reviewed. The college's management team has been proactive in closing four houses for refurbishment, as they did not meet standards. Two buildings currently remain operational. One is a newer, purpose-built provision where all learners have single study bedrooms with en suite bathrooms. The second building has been upgraded, yet has single study bedrooms with communal toilets and showers. Learners are happy with the accommodation.

Safeguarding

Inadequate

- Procedures and arrangements fail to meet the national minimum standards covering staff recruitment and vetting. As a result, the residential learners' welfare and safety are inadequately safeguarded, and they could be harmed or at risk. The early years Ofsted inspection in September 2016, the education Ofsted inspection in January 2016 and the education Ofsted monitoring visit in March 2016 all clearly identified serious shortfalls in the college's recruitment and vetting system. Leaders, managers and governors have still not tackled the shortfalls identified at these visits. Required checks are not in place for longstanding or newly appointed staff, for example a DBS check prior to appointment for a newly appointed member of staff, and previous pre-employment references and verifications for longstanding staff.
- Risk assessments are inadequate and fail to identify the specific actions required to safeguard residential learners. Risk assessments have been put in place and signed off by managers and the principal, although staff vetting checks are still outstanding for newly appointed and longstanding staff. For example, in one case there was a clear understanding that a new member of staff would have no

unsupervised contact with residential learners, but this was not reflected in the risk assessment. In another case, a longstanding member of staff without full vetting checks in place continues to have unsupervised contact with residential learners.

- The central record of the administration of any significant sanctions against a residential student is not accurate. There are sanctions that have been given by residential staff which have not been recorded centrally. This means that managers do not have a clear oversight of practice to enable them to safeguard learners and ensure consistent appropriate practice by staff.
- Residential staff's records of inappropriate behaviour and the actions taken to ensure that learners understand the consequences are not detailed enough. They do not show evidence of how staff support learning and change, or if there has been any parental involvement in the process.
- Staff consistently promote positive behaviour, and residential learners generally behave well. They are aware of the rules and the consequences of breaking them. They feel that staff are fair and recognise that they have their best interests at heart. Staff are proactive and use their experience of supporting residential learners to prevent incidents from occurring in the first place.
- Residential learners feel safe at this college, they know how to complain and bullying is not an issue for them. They can identify a trusted member of staff whom they can talk to about their concerns. There are no issues of learners going missing from college. Staff are aware of the procedures to follow, should they go missing. There are no issues around learners taking illegal substances.
- Residential learners learn to take appropriate actions to keep themselves safe. Staff have a good understanding of the range of issues that affect learners, for example anxiety, bullying and self-harm. Their understanding of current safeguarding concerns is strengthened by training and guidance in topics such as radicalisation and cyber bullying.
- Residential staff promote practice and information that help learners to make informed decisions that relate to their safety and well-being. For example, the college has just increased closed-circuit television and security in the residential accommodation. Learners have a clear understanding of why this action has been taken, and how it increases their safety and also enhances the safety and practice of staff during evening routines.
- There are clear procedures in place that promote health and safety. The new management team is proactive in supporting other managers and residential staff to ensure that any shortfalls or issues are addressed. For example, it was identified that fire panel checks in the residential accommodation had not been taking place on a weekly basis over the past academic year. Since the beginning of this term, they have been completed every week, and this is being overseen by the estates manager.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- Governors, leaders and managers have not made sufficient or timely progress in addressing outstanding shortfalls and are not complying with national minimum standards. They have not monitored or adequately dealt with continuing shortfalls in the staff recruitment and vetting procedures. As a result, residential learners

continue to be placed at risk. These shortfalls are overshadowing the progress made by managers and staff in other areas of the college.

- The college management team has been recently restructured. Two assistant principals and the student services manager are new in post this term. They are making good use of an established link with a successful college. They have visited that service. Managers from that service completed a residential provision self-assessment for the college in August 2016. The outcomes were used to create a quality improvement plan. The service is continuing to work with the college to develop the safeguarding arrangements, governance and residential provision for learners under 18.
- The residential provision is appropriately staffed to ensure the safety and well-being of learners. With the recent college restructure, two vacancies have arisen in the residential staff team. These have been covered on a temporary basis by two permanent members of college staff. This has been well managed and has ensured continuity for the learners. Both posts are now being advertised to recruit permanent staff to these posts.
- Induction and training for residential staff are not structured sufficiently. Residential staff receive an induction which, they state, is informative and helpful. However, the record of the subjects, policies and procedures covered is basic and does not provide evidence that the employee has understood them. All staff receive training. There are very clear expectations relating to some training, such as food hygiene and first aid. All staff hold these qualifications and are clear on how often these courses should be refreshed. However, there is no schedule of training that identifies what should be completed during probation and what training is mandatory for residential staff. Neither do managers have an overview of all residential staff training that states what training has been completed and when it needs to be renewed.
- Residential staff receive good support from their direct line manager and are positive about the new management team. New supervision systems have been introduced this term which, alongside regular handovers and staff meetings, keep the staff team well informed of the needs of the residential learners.

COLLEGE DETAILS

Type of college	Further education college residential provision
Age range of learners	16–18
Approximate number of learners in residence	35
Principal/CEO	Jackie Doodson
Date of previous inspection	13/02/2014
Website address	www.nsc.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

North Shropshire College was created in 2001 as a result of a merger between Walford College, primarily a specialist land-based college with its main campus near Baschurch, and the North Shropshire College, a tertiary college with its main campus in Oswestry.

The Walford campus offers term-time residential accommodation for learners between 16 and 20 years, with priority being given to learners attending land-based courses for whom daily travel presents particular problems.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspectors	Dawn Bennett SCRI
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A Social Care Regulatory Inspector (SCRI) 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 learners' achievements over the last three years to help them make judgements. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of learners and employers; 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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