

Exeter Mathematics School

Further education college residential provision

Inspection dates		14 June to 16 June 2016
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Good
	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
Outcomes for learners		Outstanding
Quality of service		Outstanding
Safeguarding		Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Good

Summary of key findings

This college is good because:

- Residential learners benefit from attending a college that has impressive facilities for advancement in mathematics.
- The quality, safety and close proximity of the purpose-built student accommodation enable residential learners to commit to their learning without the worries or distractions involved with travel.
- The learning environment is welcoming. The grounds and buildings provide very pleasant, relaxed surroundings in which the residential learners can live, develop and strive to achieve their academic goals.
- Residential learners benefit from impressive pastoral care and support. Learners and their parents spoken with provided overwhelmingly positive feedback. 'Excellent', 'exceptional' and 'blown away' are just some of the comments made by parents.
- The extremely high standard of staff practice is in accordance with the college's policies and procedures.
- Consultation with the residential learners is central to all decision-making and development of the residential service.
- Equality, diversity and inclusion are embedded throughout all aspects of college life. Individualism is celebrated and residential learners are taught to value and respect each other as equals.
- The senior leadership team and staff promote an open culture that embraces change.

This is not yet an outstanding college because:

- Residential staff require supplementary training in relation to supporting the mental health, safeguarding and emotional well-being of students.
- A number of key policies remain under review and, thus, are out of date.
- The use of reviewing, monitoring and evaluative tools, including the college's new information technology (IT) systems remains in its infancy and, thus, requires a further period to demonstrate its effectiveness.

Full Report

What does the college need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the college provides opportunities for training and updating in residential and student welfare for all its staff who have responsibilities for supervision of residential students or the provision of student welfare services. Such opportunities should be provided for both recently appointed and experienced staff (National minimum standard (NMS) 30.10).
- Ensure that a suitable statement of the college's welfare, accommodation and student support policies and practice is available to parents, students and staff. In particular, ensure that all policies held in the college and displayed on the college's website are up to date and that they accurately reflect practice (NMS 1.1).

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Outstanding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Residential learners make excellent progress from their starting points on admission to the college. They benefit enormously both academically and socially from being in residence. For example, the stresses of daily travel are significantly reduced, and extra-curricular activities are more accessible. ■ Residential learners are supported to develop a high level of independence and life skills. Observation of learners both in college and in their residential accommodation, confirms that they develop, through advice and instruction, an impressive degree of skills in and knowledge of how to be independent. Parents spoken with overwhelmingly reported positive changes in their sons and daughters. 'Fantastic experience' and, 'Being resident has definitely given my son more independence and confidence, preparing him for university life' are just two of many comments shared with the inspector. ■ Residential learners spoke extremely positively of their experiences of life at the college. They reported experiencing 'excellent support' from staff, which has helped them to prepare for living independently of their families. In particular, they reported how the ethos and philosophy of the college have enabled them to show 'consideration of others' differences and individualities'. ■ Parents are extremely complimentary about how successful the staff have been in enabling learners to raise their self-esteem and confidence. One parent could not speak highly enough of the 'transformation' that they witnessed in their son. They spoke of how they had wondered, when he was young, if their son would be able to live independently, and now, as a result of this year in residence, he is far more 'equipped and able'. ■ Staff recognise the high levels of expectation that the learners place on themselves, and they work hard to support them as they navigate their way through learning and living away from home. They provide the learners with excellent information and guidance on rules and expectations of behaviour and on maintaining good health. Thus, learners respect and understand community living, and reports 	

indicate that the learners' behaviours are exemplary.

- Documents scrutinised during the course of the inspection indicate that residential learners make excellent academic progress. Learners are achieving impressive results, which supports their opportunities to access universities and careers of their choice.

Quality of service	Outstanding
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| Quality of service | Outstanding |
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- The quality of the service is outstanding because resident learners receive excellent pastoral care and resources to support their academic and personal progress. Learners and parents are provided with informative and detailed handbooks to assist with their admission to the college. Clear pre-admission documentation prepares learners well for their time at college. Residential learners contribute to and discuss residential living.
 - Each learner is provided with all the relevant information that they require to enable a smooth induction. Parents spoken with confirmed that they were given plenty of information on supervision, a tour of accommodation and a chance to become acquainted with staff.
 - The residential staff present as extremely positive role models, with a range of skills, expertise, and core qualities that are evident in their approach. Mutually respectful, supporting and working relationships co-exist between academic and residential staff and learners. This ensures that learners are supported in a joined-up way.
 - Staff place an emphasis on the learning environment being relaxed but with a structure and a discipline that promote respectful and courteous behaviours. Observation and discussion with resident learners confirmed the ways in which they are routinely consulted and included through healthy debate and challenge, and, in this way, resident learners remain central to decision-making.
 - The college has excellent relationships with its sponsoring university and college. As a result, resident learners are able to access a range of health services, including counselling. While there is no medical practitioner employed by the college, all staff are suitably trained and knowledgeable in first aid. The resident learners have access to local medical services and health professionals. The promotion of well-being is excellent, and learners are aware of and take up the services and facilities provided.
 - The purpose-built residential provision meets the needs of the learners. Accommodation facilities provide learners with comfortable, well-furnished areas where learners are appropriately supervised and supported, according to their ages and genders. Excellent security systems ensure that learners are safe and secure at all times. Residential learners are provided with opportunities to discuss the accommodation, they bring suggestions for improvements and there is good evidence of how the learners personalise their accommodation.
 - A key strength of the residential staff is the importance that they place on learners developing independent living skills. Impressively, all resident learners complete a food and hygiene course, and staff are available to teach, support and encourage cooking skills. A parent spoken with reported, 'He has been very happy there and has become a very independent young man. The students have learnt to budget and cook healthy meals for each other. This started right at the beginning of the

first year and has carried on. I'm sure the students will be very well prepared for life at university with the skills they have learned.'

Safeguarding

Good

- Safeguarding at the college is good because the importance of learners' safety is embedded throughout all areas. The management of safeguarding and child protection is highly effective and organised. Parents say that they have confidence in the college's safeguarding procedures and pastoral care. For example, one parent reported pastoral care to be 'exceptional' and the 'supervision has been at just the right level to give me peace of mind that he is safe'.
- Safeguarding policies and procedures are detailed and clear, and work in accordance with local authority protocols. However, during the course of the inspection, it was noted that a number of policies, including safeguarding, e-safety and behaviour management policies were significantly out of date. This oversight has not resulted in any safeguarding concerns, and the head of service was swift to address this omission.
- The head of service is the designated safeguarding lead and is suitably qualified and experienced. They provide exceptional leadership and management of all aspects of safeguarding. All staff receive mandatory induction and refresher training on child protection and safeguarding. Staff spoken with demonstrated a good level of skill and understanding of the procedures to follow in the event of a concern. While staff are trained and routinely updated in child protection, it was noted that staff could benefit from receiving more advanced levels of this subject matter to support their understanding further.
- A strength of the college is the work that it has undertaken on radicalisation and extremism awareness. The college has invested greatly in raising awareness of the 'Prevent' duty to ensure that awareness of radicalisation and extremism is proactively promoted across the whole college. Innovative displays around the college keep the information at the forefront of everybody's awareness and practice.
- Inappropriate behaviours are rare and are addressed quickly and effectively through discussion. This allows learners to live in a safe environment. There are no trends of bullying, victimisation or harassment. Learners spoken with understand that their safety and well-being are priorities.
- All residential learners are fully aware of expectations of behaviour and feel that the staff treat them fairly and with respect. The main focus of behaviour is on positive reinforcement. The college rules are based on good community living, respect, valuing the individual and mutual support.
- The management and reviewing of health and safety is good. Regular checks are undertaken on the utilities and equipment, and comprehensive records are maintained. Fire drills are completed in accordance with policy. Action was taken during the inspection to plan fire drills to take place at different times of the day and night.
- The college has rigorous recruitment and vetting policies and procedures that are consistently followed. Staff qualified in safer recruitment ensure the promotion of safeguarding throughout the recruitment and selection process. In carrying this out,

they protect residential learners from unsuitable adults.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leadership is good because a highly effective and strong leadership team works together with a passion for the residential learners to succeed. Learners are at the heart of the residential provision and college.
- The head of service is deployed to manage the residential provision as well as to teach in the college. He has an impressive knowledge, qualification and skill base, with strong leadership abilities that are shared with all residential staff.
- The college has a strong mission statement, core value strategy and operational objectives. A parent spoke highly of how the management of the residential provision has an impact on their son: 'We have been overwhelmed by the open and transparent professionalism of all those who come into contact with our son and, indeed, ourselves, whether they be teaching, mentoring, pastoral, or administrative staff.'
- The college's self-evaluation remains in its infancy, but overall it is insightful and accurately reflects the progress and outcomes that have been achieved thus far. The head of service recognises this and looks to develop a more robust means of monitoring, reviewing and evaluation. It is envisaged that this will take place over the coming months and in line with the introduction of the college's new management information system.
- All of the national minimum standards have been met. Further to this, there is much enthusiasm, commitment and passion emitted by the head of service and his staff team in relation to the future of the college's residential provision. By the use of questionnaires, surveys and consultations with learners and parents, the head of service ensures that all those who work in or use the provision are included in its development and its attempts to exceed the standards.
- Staff spoken with confirm that they receive a good standard of supervision, training and support from the head of service, but could benefit from additional training in safeguarding and mental health. Regular appraisals enable them to address their continuous professional development. By providing research updates and learning opportunities, the head of service is proactive in ensuring that their practice remains up to date and current.
- There is a good range of policies and procedures supporting the requirements of the residential provision. However, the inspection coincided with these being reviewed and some were significantly out of date. The head of college and head of service accepted this oversight and were in the process of addressing this requirement.

College Details

Type of college	Further education college residential provision
Age range of learners	16 to 18
Approximate number of learners in residence	32
Principal/CEO	Kerry Burnham
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Website address	www.exetermathematicsschool.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

Exeter Mathematics School (EMS) is a state-funded 6th form providing residential accommodation. It is specifically designed to meet the needs of able mathematics students throughout the South West. It aims to provide a world-class education, enabling students to flourish at university and to pursue successful careers in the mathematical sciences.

Currently, there are 32 residential learners between the ages of 16 and 18 years old.

The purpose-built student accommodation is situated in very close proximity to the main site. For some residential learners, Homestay lodgings accommodation is available.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector	Linda Bond SCRI
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Linda Bond, Social Care Regulatory Inspector (SCRI), carried out the inspection with three hours' notice.

The inspector took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans. The inspector also used data on learners' achievements over the last two years to help to make judgements. The inspector used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of learners and employees; 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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