

# King Edward VI College, Stourbridge

Lower High Street, Stourbridge, West Midlands DY8 1TD

Inspection of residential provision

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## **Information about this further education college with residential accommodation**

King Edward VI College Stourbridge is a sixth-form college in Stourbridge. Stourbridge is part of the Metropolitan Borough of Dudley. The college has 2116 students, with the vast majority aged 16 to 18 years old. The college offers programmes of study that are based on a core of at least two A levels. All international students are doing three or four A levels.

The college has offered homestay accommodation to international students for approximately four years. This academic year, the college has introduced on-site residential accommodation for their international students as well. In total, the college has 40 residential students, 15 of whom are living on site. All are currently 16 or 17 years old.

Inspection dates      3 to 5 October 2017

**Overall experiences and progress of young people, taking in account**      **good**

How well young people are helped and protected      good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers      good

The college provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** N/A

**Date of last inspection:** N/A

## Key findings from this inspection

This college is good because:

- Young people enjoy their residential college experience. They enjoy being independent. They are polite, helpful and committed to their studies. Those in homestay provision like the families they are staying with.
- Young people make good progress with their studies. They have high aspirations and achieve high grades.
- Young people say that teaching and support staff are very helpful.
- Young people are not yet formally asked for their views and opinions about residential life. However, some informal systems exist and young people appear well informed about college life.
- Staff take swift, effective action to ensure that young people are safe from harm.
- Young people know how to contact staff at times when staff are not present on the college campus.
- Leaders are responsive and keen to improve the residential service.

The college's areas for development:

- Staff are not present on the college campus at all times outside of teaching time. Staff who are responsible for young people do not hold a first aid qualification.
- There is not a range of activities available to young people.
- The college does not have a system of self-assessment for the residential provision.
- Homestay provision is not well organised.
- Staff do not go back to referees to get more detail when information provided in references is vague.
- Safeguarding records are not comprehensive and do not detail the outcome of the concern.
- The common room, available to young people staying in both on-site accommodation and homestay accommodation, is not widely known about. Furthermore, it is not an inviting space.

## **What does the college need to do to improve?**

### **Compliance with the national minimum standards for accommodation of students under 18 by further education colleges:**

The college does not meet the following national minimum standards for accommodation of students under 18 by further education colleges:

- Ensure that the college implements a process of regular self-assessment of its residential and student welfare practice.
- Ensure that there are sufficient staff, in numbers and availability, to maintain adequate supervision of students on all college sites outside teaching time, taking into account the age and nature of the student population, the layout of the college and grounds, and the range and nature of any activities involved.
- Ensure that a member of staff holding a current first aid qualification is available to students at all times on college sites.
- Ensure that any lodgings arranged directly by the college to accommodate students under 18 provide satisfactory accommodation and supervision, are checked by the college before use, and are monitored by the college during use.

#### **Points for improvement:**

- Ensure that on receipt, references are checked to ensure that all specific questions have been answered satisfactorily. The referee should be contacted to provide further clarification as appropriate, for example if the answers are vague.
- Ensure that there are detailed, accurate, secure written records of all concerns and referrals. Ensure that staff have a clear understanding of safeguarding procedures.
- Ensure that common room facilities, where homestay and residential students can meet in the evenings, is well known by the students and is an inviting space.

## **Inspection judgements**

### **Overall experiences and progress of young people: good**

Young people enjoy the residential experience, whether they are in the on-site or the homestay provision. They say that they like the opportunity to be independent. They work hard studying for their A level courses and make good progress in this regard. Most young people achieve grades A\* to B.

Young people have felt welcomed into the college. A clear induction into college life is provided. This has included a much-enjoyed welcome meal for all residential students, staff and host families. Furthermore, a buddying system is planned to help Year 12 students to settle. Young people say that they feel very well supported by their tutors and teaching staff.

Young people have registered with a local doctor and dentist. They also have access to an in-house counselling service. Furthermore, arrangements are now in place to ensure that young people who are ill and remain in the on-site accommodation are regularly monitored. Leaders have plans to recruit a nurse to further enhance the physical healthcare of young people.

Staff who are responsible for young people outside of teaching time are not first aid trained. This means that staff are unable to provide essential first aid to young people if this is required. Leaders are seeking an appropriate first aid course for these staff to complete as soon as possible.

Young people are high achievers. They are aspirational and extremely focused on their studies. They are supported well by their teaching and support tutors. Young people say that teachers give them extra tuition if they request this. All young people are given lessons in English as an additional language. These lessons are geared towards each young person's individual abilities.

Leisure activities are not well established. Residential staff take in board games or they open up the gym and sports hall, dependent on their area of expertise. However, leaders are planning greater leisure opportunities for young people. Young people have expressed a desire to have a safe social space at the college where on-site and homestay residential students can meet. Currently, they tend to meet outside because they say they don't have anywhere else to go. A common room is currently available to them but this is not widely known. Furthermore, it is not an inviting space. Students have also said that they would appreciate a discounted rate at the local swimming pool. This is something that leaders are looking at. Young people can access free music tuition. Increasing the number of activities outside of teaching time is a developing area for this new provision.

The student voice process is another area of development. Young people say that they have a student who liaises between them and the management team. Nevertheless, they have minor concerns, and some great ideas, that leaders are not hearing. For example, young people living on site have differing views about the food provided. Leaders are planning to survey young people regarding their views about the food. Young people discussed some good ideas with the inspector about leisure activities, and leaders are now considering these ideas.

On-site accommodation is provided in a newly refurbished building that provides young people with individual, en-suite study bedrooms. Bedrooms have been fitted with notice boards so that young people can personalise their rooms. Each floor has a small common room that includes a television, comfortable seating and a small kitchen area. Young people have a fridge, microwave and toaster. Young people say that they would really like a freezer for ice cream and a stove so that they can cook more for themselves. They like the idea of bean bags to provide more seating. Young people prepare breakfast for themselves. An evening meal is provided in a canteen area. The accommodation is secure from intruders.

## **How well young people are helped and protected: good**

Safeguarding young people is a priority at this college. Young people say that they feel safe. Staff take swift, effective action to ensure that young people are safe from harm. The designated safeguarding lead is a senior member of the college staff and has attended a range of safeguarding courses, including relevant courses with the Local Safeguarding Children Board. Staff have access to good training opportunities including the 'Prevent' strategy. The procedure for reporting concerns works well in most cases. However, some of the staff guidance is unclear. This has led to some confusion in terms of the actions that staff should take. Furthermore, records of identified concerns do not contain enough detail about the actions taken and the outcome of the concern.

Young people do not go missing from the residential provision. However, staff do not have a comprehensive understanding of the procedures to follow if young people are late back into the residential accommodation. The policy is clear, but this policy is new to staff. Leaders are reiterating the policy with all staff who work in the on-site provision.

The behaviour of young people is very good. They are well mannered and helpful. There are no incidents of illegal substance misuse or poor behaviour. Young people do not report that bullying is an issue. They say that they get on well together. Staff act on any concerns regarding bullying quickly and effectively.

Concerns arising from discrimination are managed well. An example of this has been the response from staff when a young person was discriminated against due to their sexual identity.

Vetting procedures help to protect young people from being placed with unsuitable adults. However, procedures require improvement because references that are vague are not followed up and clarified with the referee.

Young people in on-site accommodation know the fire safety procedures. They have had the opportunity to practice fire evacuation. Fire safety procedures are good and help to protect young people.

## **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good**

The college has experienced some disruption with the onset of the new on-site residential provision. This has caused delays in implementing a number of systems. Examples of these are implementing ways of capturing the student voice and planning a greater range of activities. Leaders have been responsive to the recommendations made during the inspection. A large number of recommendations have already been implemented. This demonstrates a willingness to improve, ensuring that young people receive a better service.

Leaders have not yet implemented a system of self-evaluation for the residential accommodation they provide. This would be beneficial in providing leaders with a better

understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the service. This will then guide their future planning and progress.

Homestay accommodation has not been well managed. Students are very happy with their homestay accommodation, and homestay families are appropriately vetted. Host families say that they feel well supported by the college. However, annual visits have not always occurred, and checks such as gas safety certificates are either not on the college files or have not been completed for some families' homes.

Leaders are reviewing the level of supervision of young people to ensure that staff are available to students outside of teaching time. This is currently achieved via an on-call telephone system. Staff who live close by are contactable by telephone, and have direct contact with young people at critical periods such as meal and curfew times. This leaves young people without adult supervision for the majority of the time, especially at weekends. Interim measures mean that staff are sleeping in the on-site provision. However, this is due to come to an end when the new boarding coordinator commences their post. Nevertheless, young people know the rules about going off-site and ensure that they text the on-call telephone when they leave and when they return. Young people also abide by the curfew rules. New monitoring procedures have been introduced to ensure that young people go to bed at reasonable times.

## **Information about this inspection**

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of young people. They watched how professional staff work with young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Whenever possible, they talked to young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the college knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

Using the 'Social care common inspection framework', this inspection was carried out under the Children Act 1989 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, and to consider how well it complies with the national minimum standards.

## **Further education college with residential accommodation details**

**Social care unique reference number:** 1268532

**Principal/CEO:** Ms Remley Mann

### **Inspector**

Joanne Vyas, social care inspector

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