

# Moulton College

Moulton College, West Street, Moulton, Northampton NN3 7RR

Inspection of residential provision.

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework.

## Information about this further education college with residential accommodation

Moulton College is an independent further education college providing a wide range of education and training for young people and adults. The main campus is in the rural village of Moulton, close to Northampton. The college admits students, including those aged under 18, on a residential basis. The accommodation provides single and twin rooms with en-suite facilities. The under-18 student accommodation is separate. At the time of inspection, there were 96 resident students aged under 18. A significant number of them contributed to this inspection.

Inspection dates      5 to 7 December 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:** good

**Date of last inspection:** 10 November 2015

## Key findings from this inspection

This college is good because:

- Young people told inspectors they were happy staying in the residential provision. They make good friends. They develop experience in living independently and learn valuable life skills.
- College attendance figures and overall academic attainment are better for residential students compared to their day student counterparts. Young people have high aspirations and achieve their ambitions.
- Overall, young people have good relationships with residential wardens. Young people value the support, care and encouragement that wardens provide.
- Consultation with young people continues to improve. However, more work is required to make consultation with students wholly effective.
- The health and well-being of young people remains a high priority for leaders of the college. Trained nurses provide young people with the help that they need in relation to their health. There is particularly good understanding of the emotional and mental health needs of young people. Staff have received specific training in mental health issues. Workshops are provided for young people to promote good emotional and mental health.

The college's areas for development:

- Communication between leaders of the college and young people needs further improvement so that day-to-day issues in residential life can be resolved quickly and effectively.
- There are some hygiene issues linked to the practice of young people taking hot food from the restaurant to their rooms.
- The wardens' monitoring of young people's communal areas could be better, so that any damaged appliances or equipment is quickly repaired or replaced.
- The college should review the current procedures for when young people are off site late at night and, due to unforeseen circumstances, need to return to campus.

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

### **Recommendations**

- Ensure that concerns regarding young people's welfare and well-being are resolved without unnecessary delay. Ensure that the recording of these concerns on the electronic system is sufficiently detailed.
- The college should ensure that wardens do not use inappropriate language, towards young people.

### **Points for improvement**

- Ensure that the college has strong and effective processes to assess young people's vulnerabilities at the beginning of their residential stays, and provide early support for vulnerable young people.
- Ensure improved recording by staff on the new electronic system. Recording is not yet sufficiently detailed.
- The college must make greater efforts to improve communication with young people. Young people must be confident and have the means to raise any matters of dissatisfaction with leaders. Young people should receive a response to issues they raise.
- Residential wardens should receive regular reviews of their practice. This is currently not taking place.
- The college should review the health and hygiene implications of young people taking cooked food to their rooms.
- Residential wardens should ensure that they identify, during their nightly health and safety checks, issues such as missing waste bins. They should also report any items that are damaged or broken.
- Ensure that the showers in the residential blocks have sufficient pressure and temperature controls to provide young people with adequate facilities.

### **Inspection judgements**

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

Young people enjoy life on campus, including the range of recreational activities available to them. Young people get good support from college staff. Young people develop independence skills. They enjoy the opportunity to develop friendships with other young people. Residential students have better results than day students and have higher attendance rates.

Young people benefit from a good level of support from pastoral staff. Young people particularly value the support from wardens and nurses. Young people stated, 'We love the wardens. They spend time with us and they are always available.' When young people are homesick, wardens are very supportive. This helps young people to settle

quickly and sets them on course to do well academically. Wardens provide young people with the oversight and guidance that they require, responding quickly to any disturbances. However, a warden has used inappropriate language towards some young people who had been in breach of the residential rules. Leaders of the college have quickly acknowledged that this is not acceptable.

Leaders of the college have taken action to improve consultation with young people. Monthly forums now take place in which young people can raise any concerns that they have. Leaders have listened to the views of young people and taken action in response. Additionally, all young people in residence have a termly individual meeting with wardens to review progress. Leaders are introducing student mentors. This role will complement existing wardens and nurses in providing individual support to young people. Consultation with the young people could be further strengthened. During the inspection, young people presented inspectors with a number of day-to-day issues that they would like improved. Leaders have not ensured that young people can raise these matters with them directly so that they can be resolved quickly.

Leaders of the college have taken steps, since the last inspection, to improve the quality of food. A food survey was recently undertaken. Following this, the college increased the range and quality of food available. Young people can now have 'takeout food' from the restaurant to fit in with their college commitments. They also meet directly with the chef to provide their views about the food. However, there are some hygiene concerns relating to the practice of students bringing cooked food to their rooms and not consuming it immediately.

The healthcare needs of young people are a key priority for leaders of the college. Young people can access nursing services on site. Nurses provide good-quality support to all young people, particularly those who have emotional or mental health needs. For example, they closely monitor young people who self-harm. Young people also have access to in-house counselling and chaplaincy services. Both provide young people with the opportunity to talk confidentially, about matters important to them. Some staff have completed a mental health first aid course, and the leadership intends to train more staff in this area. Young people have taken part in workshops designed to enhance their mental health and well-being. The college takes these issues very seriously, recognising the whole life benefit of good mental health.

Young people have a range of accommodation on campus, both single occupancy and shared rooms with en-suites. Twin rooms have lockable cupboards. All single bedrooms have space for individual study and non-lockable storage cupboards. Young people can personalise their rooms as they wish. Each floor has a common room that now contains a microwave, fridge and kettle. Wardens have not always ensured that these rooms are monitored closely and problems resolved. For example, one common room contained a freezer that was overflowing with ice, rendering it unusable. There is scope to improve the common rooms by improving the quality of furnishings and providing additional equipment. Posters in communal areas provide young people with useful information about services available and activities on offer. Young people particularly enjoy a communal area called 'the loft', the games room and the cinema room.

College leaders maintain good communication with parents and carers. Both email and telephone contact takes place. Young people and their families understand what to expect of residential living on campus. Parents sign a contract that sets out expectations of behaviour. If expectations are not met, the college will liaise closely with parents to resolve issues quickly. Additionally, close communication takes place when there are concerns for the welfare of young people.

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

The overriding priority for this college is the safety of young people. Young people say they feel safe. They can talk to wardens, nurses and other staff if they are worried about anything. Staff know what action to take if they are concerned about the safety of a young person. Staff and governors have undertaken safeguarding training to increase their knowledge of child protection issues such as sexting, radicalisation and online abuse. The governors play a central role in holding college staff, including leaders, to account for their safeguarding practice. They do this by scrutinising safeguarding practice using a range of reports and performance data.

New staff undergo thorough vetting procedures. These checks include a criminal history check. The employment history of prospective employees is carefully reviewed, and references taken and verified. This is a good and robust system that protects young people from unsuitable adults.

Leaders of the college have recently introduced a new electronic recording system. The system provides valuable information on how the college is keeping young people safe. The system is promising, and offers an excellent opportunity to share information across the residential and academic staff team. However, the college recognises the system requires further development. Inspectors found two examples where records could have been more detailed and where staff did not record further actions required and timescales for these actions. This increases the risk that important tasks might be overlooked.

The behaviour of young people is good. They are polite, well mannered, and helpful. There are no incidents of illegal substance misuse. Nurses provide very good information about the dangers of substance misuse. They recently invited a specialist service into the college to provide education about the dangers of substance misuse. Young people found this helpful. Overall, young people have good relationships with each other and there is no bullying. Staff will intervene and make efforts to improve relationships between young people if difficulties arise. This is particularly the situation with young people sharing rooms. Staff will make efforts to help young people live together if this becomes problematic. Young people support each other. For example, they understand the pressures facing new young people in residence and go out of their way to help them settle. Some young people are taking sign language lessons because some students have a hearing impairment.

Young people do not go missing. Staff know when the young person leaves site and the

expected time of return. Should any concerns arise; staff will try to contact the young person and their family to satisfy themselves that the young person is safe. Parents and young people understand the rules about leaving and returning to the college campus. However, when young people return to campus outside of their agreed period of absence from campus, usually at night, wardens will use their discretion. In some circumstances, young people may be under the influence of alcohol and they may receive a disciplinary warning. The college remain aware of the possible unintended consequence of young people being deterred from returning for fear of a disciplinary sanction. This has the potential to expose them to risk.

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

Leaders are ambitious and seek continuous improvement of the residential provision. To support the drive for improvement, they have set strategic objectives and have developed a range of mechanisms to review progress against these objectives. These mechanisms include comprehensive data collection and regular reporting to the senior leadership team and governors. Consequently, senior leaders and governors have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the residential provision.

Leaders have responded positively to concerns and issues raised with them by young people during student forum meetings. For example, the food quality has improved, a traffic light system has been introduced to inform young people which food choices are healthiest, and breakfast times have been extended to allow young people to have a more relaxed breakfast time. This demonstrates a listening leadership who try, where possible, to make changes to benefit young people.

Young people and parents can make complaints if they feel aggrieved. The complaints procedure is clear to understand. Leaders try to resolve complaints at the first informal stage if possible. If this is not possible, the complainant can escalate concerns through the process.

Leaders have worked hard to ensure that the communication between residential staff and academic staff is good and supports young people to make progress. Academic staff will contact wardens if students are late or absent from lessons, and wardens will address these concerns with young people. Additionally, if wardens or academic staff are worried about young people, they will develop a plan to provide additional support.

Health and safety, including fire safety, arrangements are of a good quality. The young people, when moving to the residential provision, receive a briefing about health and safety to keep them safe on campus. Fire drills are undertaken regularly, and routine fire safety checks are completed in accordance with the fire risk assessment.

## **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. Wherever 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:** SC042117

**Principal:** Stephen Davies

### **Inspectors**

Phillip Morris, social care inspector

Joanne Vyas, social care inspector



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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
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