

Myerscough College

Myerscough College, Myerscough Hall, St Michaels Road, Bilsborrow, Preston PR3 0RY
Inspection of residential provision

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this further education college with residential accommodation

Myerscough College is a specialist land-based college located near Preston in Lancashire. The main campus includes a farm, horticultural provision, ornamental gardens, a sports centre, a golf academy, sports pitches, engineering workshops and mechanisation facilities. Seven halls of residence provide accommodation for students aged 16–18 years. There were 240 students in residence at the time of the inspection. The college does not arrange any student lodgings with host families.

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 requires improvement to be good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers good

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

Overall judgement at last inspection: Outstanding

Date of last inspection: 12 March 2014

Key findings from this inspection

This college is good because:

- Students say they enjoy positive relationships with staff. This helps them to feel safe as they can talk to staff about most things and know that staff will take action to help them.
- Students say that they enjoy their residential experience and that this was a big part of their decision to come here. They say that the residential experience helps them to gain independence skills and to achieve their personal goals.
- Students enjoy a warm, welcoming and inclusive environment that exists in all parts of the campus. They thoroughly enjoy the many opportunities to mix with other students because they can develop new interests and skills.
- Students' views are actively sought by staff, and their ideas are acted upon. Improvements in catering, and the establishment of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) groups have grown in collaboration between staff and students.
- Residential students are doing better than their high-performing day-student peers. A residential student said that as a result of staying in residence, they are now able to get their work in on time and achieve good results with ease. This significantly reduces their stress and anxiety, and builds their confidence and self-esteem.
- Leaders and managers are committed to improving the residential provision. This is evident from the swift action taken to address the shortfalls at this inspection. The governing body is supportive of the leaders and managers.

The college's areas for development:

- Enhance further the communication systems between care staff, student welfare and teaching staff to support safeguarding and promotion of student welfare. In particular, ensure that there are clearly defined audit trails of information and of the action taken in light of this. (National Minimum Standards, 13.7)
- Enhance further the college's safeguarding policy to include a requirement for a referral to be made within 24 hours of any allegations or suspicions of abuse to social care as per statutory guidance. (National Minimum Standards, 3.2)

What does the college need to do to improve?

Recommendations

- The DSL to ensure that the college's student protection policy is followed. In particular, to make and keep written records of any decisions made and any actions identified, as set out in 'Keeping children safe in education, statutory guidance for schools and colleges', September 2016. (National Minimum Standards, 3.3)
- A senior member of the college's staff regularly monitors the college's records of risk assessment, sanctions against students, complaints, and accidents, to identify any issues requiring action. (National Minimum Standards, 21.2)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of young people: good

There are many aspects of very good practice within the college and the experiences offered to all students. However, this is not reflected in the quality of records maintained by the college. These have limited detail about the creative and individualised work that staff carry out to support all students. The college has taken swift and immediate action to develop plans to address the shortfalls identified in this inspection.

Young people enjoy very positive relationships with staff. They value the interest shown by residential support officers (RSOs) and also sports coaches. They are confident to approach staff with any concerns and are confident that their concerns will be sorted out. This is because staff take the time to talk and listen to students. As a result students are becoming much more confident in their own abilities. A parent said, 'My child has autism and dyspraxia, and living at college gives them structure and independence. This helps with college work and life in general.'

One student said that without the support they had received from staff 'there is no way I would have been sitting here a year ago talking to you'. Another student said that they became a residential student as they felt that they were missing out on the benefits of living in such a sociable community. They explained that this was the right move for them as they no longer need to ask for extensions on submission dates and, as a result, their results are improving. International students say they are happy here and that they have good contact with families over the internet. They feel that the benefits of being residential, such as access to sports facilities and developing their independence, outweigh the deficit of not being at home for large periods of time. Being a residential student enhances their career pathway, and enables them to develop the skills to move away from home, keep themselves safe and manage their finances.

Students value individual target setting with key workers highly. The continuous support of staff is exemplified by the encouragement given to one student to come along to netball practice. She told inspectors that the 'nudge' by staff has resulted in her discovering a passion for the game, and opening the door for her to become a paid

coach and to play for several teams.

A key strength of the college is its commitment to inclusivity. In recent years, there has been an increase in the number of students who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. Carefully planned transitions into college and the support provided to students and their families is exemplary. However, written records such as care plans are not sufficiently detailed. They do not highlight the extensive support provided to students.

Risk assessments are not in place for those students for whom there are specific concerns in relation to self-harm and the risk of suicide. This means that staff are not fully appraised of the current risks and actions to take to support the student. This does not promote consistency of care.

Staff are committed to promoting diversity in every part of college life for all students. This is typified by the work undertaken with LGBTQ Lancashire, enabling the college to develop its own LGBT group. Staff said, 'This has been a real success story, and out of the LGBT group the members have formed other sub groups – dungeons and dragons, reading club. It has become a real society.' Inspectors observed how well students with SEN and/or disabilities were integrated into campus life. They participated in everyday activities as part of the college community.

Students value the welfare systems available to them. The CORE is the epicentre of the college and support for students. Students say that they go to see, 'Super (name of member of staff).' Students say that they do not know the staff member's title but describe them as being a 'legend' who can resolve any problem that they have.

Students say that the support that they receive from nursing staff and counsellors is 'brilliant'. As part of their induction, the nurse spoke to them about existing conditions and provided additional support to help them overcome injuries. They said that the first aid training was 'brilliant', and that they would be confident to put their new skills into practice, which happened. One student was able to support someone who had collapsed in the street. They provided the right support until the emergency services arrived.

All staff are committed to helping students to remain fit and well. Students expressed different views about food provided by the college. In particular, students wanted catering to be available later than the current time because they got hungry after sports practice and matches. One student said that they wished that chips were not on the menu so often. This was because he was trying to remain fit and healthy and they posed a temptation to him. Most were complimentary about the help that catering staff give them to ensure they are not exposed to food that would cause an allergic reaction. This include preparing specific meals for them. Others explained how catering staff are helping them to manage their carbohydrate intake to manage their diabetes safely.

Staff source and access an extensive range of information about their students. Staff understand that students learn in different ways. This is typified in the development of the college library. The librarian and staff have created a warm and inviting place in

which to study. This includes relaxation areas where they can have a hot drink and something to eat before going back to their studies. As a result, this is a well-used resource that supports students' educational achievements.

Students enjoy an extensive range of activities during the evenings and weekends. Basketball students explained the positives of being able to set up a game at any time and put into practice what they have learned during the day. Following consultation with students, the college introduced additional activities that are not sports based. These include baking, quizzes, bingo, and arts and crafts. This has seen an increase in students accessing recreational activities.

Independent careers officers provide good support to students. They aid students in carefully planning the next stage in their lives, whether this is employment or higher education. This support starts at the beginning of the student's journey at the college. All students are enrolled on the 'learn to work programme', and are given a KUDOS account so that they can contact the careers officer at any time. Students are supported effectively in completing their applications for university, apprenticeships or employment. As a result a high number of students secure a place at their chosen universities. The high number of sports students gaining scholarships to attend university in America exemplifies this.

How well young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

Young people say that they are safe and happy in college, and that staff are good at helping them to stay safe.

Inspectors found a sharp difference between staff's good safeguarding knowledge and effective safeguarding practice, and the poor quality of how safeguarding is recorded. Staff undertake dynamic risk assessments but do not record these. This prevents a clear audit of the decisions and actions of staff. Furthermore, the risk categories used within the electronic system are not the same as those used in education-based assessments of need, and so there is room for error in categorisation and identification of risk. This dual system does not identify clearly how much support a student really needs.

The college demonstrates an effective approach to wider safeguarding matters. However, the college does not meet all of the statutory and other government requirements to safeguard and protect young people. In particular, this relates to the quality of records being maintained and the college's own safeguarding policy. The college fails to maintain a consistently proper record of any referral or safeguarding concerns even when these do not lead to a referral. This is a recording issue.

The college interacts well with partner protection professionals, and ensures that staff are trained effectively. This is evident in outcomes for students and site safety where cleaners, catering staff and community-based college staff recognise and report concerns in a wide range of circumstances. The college is undertaking work with Project Griffin, and a number of staff have been key in delivering this work to other schools and

sports clubs throughout the region. The college enhances the 'Run Hide Tell' training so that staff can respond appropriately, and this has included enhanced first aid training in case help is needed during a lockdown event. Students say this training has been invaluable to them to learn how to keep themselves and others safe. The regional lead professional for Prevent said, 'The leadership team have been highly effective in helping the college and wider community to understand that staying safe is everyone's responsibility. They model best practice.'

Students do not go missing from college because they feel happy and safe here. A student said, 'I always wanted to come here as it was the best place for basketball, and it's living up to their reputation. I enjoy living in and I go home at the weekend, but can't wait to get back.' Students sign in and out, and staff track their return times, chasing them up when they are late. Parents are asked to sign their child in when they go home. One parent said that the staff were quick to respond when she forgot to update the 'Parent Portal'. The college provides transport to ensure that students catch the right buses, trains, boats and planes home. Staff routinely contact families to ensure that those who are travelling long distances arrive home safely. This attention to student safety is admirable and is a key strength of the college.

Inspectors saw that staff use their warm relationships with students to encourage them to think about their behaviour and the way it impacts upon themselves and others. This is their mainline approach. This means that when things go wrong for students a proportionate approach is undertaken. When students disagree with sanctions, they are given a clear and prompt response to their complaint. There is evidence that decisions have been reversed as students are listened to. Students said bullying is not an issue for them. A student said that they have been bullied in their previous school but not at college. They said that they knew staff would act quickly if this was to occur.

Older students told inspectors how valuable the good parenting was that they received from staff when aged between 16 and 18 years. They said that it provided a foundation for them to become more mature young adults. One young adult said,

'When I was drinking too much, and got in with the wrong crowd, staff just talked to me about it. At home I would have got into rows. I learned to think about what was important to me, and my course is really important. Staff stuck with me till I learned that, and now I am doing a degree.'

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Senior leaders and managers are ambitious for each student. They have high expectations for students. The leadership team takes its responsibilities seriously and strives to ensure that students are at the centre of all its activities and focus.

Inspectors saw many positive things happening in practice. Records reflect the action taken by college and the plans for each student. However, they are not sufficiently detailed to ensure consistent care. The impact of this is minimised because of staff's understanding of each student. A number of records relating to the help and protection of students do not demonstrate that sufficient action has been identified and followed

through to ensure the students' safety and well-being. Records do not demonstrate effectively all of the work and good practice undertaken by the college.

A key strength of the college is the inclusive approach that is interwoven into all aspects of the college. Examples of this include the support given to a student to aid their transition into college and the ongoing support provided; a growing and thriving resource available for students who have SEN and/or disabilities; a growing number of courses and activities available for non-sporty students. All activity is geared towards ensuring that students are equipped to make maximum progress in their adult lives. The strong community spirit ensures that everyone believes security and safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

Leaders and managers collect and analyse data about the residential provision. From this they know that the residential students are performing better than their high-performing non-residential peers. Effective support is provided to students who are struggling. This includes homework clubs and tutorials to improve their grades. Inspectors have seen and heard many testimonials from students about the support they are provided with and the benefits of staying in residence.

Staff use their personal relationships with students to gain their views and take action on these. For example, some students asked that an area in the common room be painted pink, which happened. Students' complaints are acted upon, and students are provided with an acceptable resolution.

A committed staff team supports students. The organisation of the residential team shift pattern limits the opportunities for the team to meet as a group or with its external care partners, and to participate in reflective practice. Action was taken during the inspection to address this. Managers work tirelessly to support staff, and ensure that direct work with students remains first rate.

Secure recruitment and induction practice helps to keep students safe. An extensive training package is provided to staff across a wide range of topics. There are extensive monitoring systems in place. Reports are completed on a regular basis and are shared with governors with actions identified for follow-up. However, this inspection has identified a number of shortfalls in recording that the college audits have not picked up. Throughout the inspection, leaders and managers were taking steps to address all shortfalls identified.

Governors are enthusiastic and interested in what is happening on a day-to-day basis. Governors have development plans specific to their roles and responsibilities. The new safeguarding governor has engaged in shadowing the outgoing post holder and identified personal targets to improve their effectiveness in the role. The chair of governors is making changes as to how governors are seen by students and staff. He is striving to make the governors more visible and accessible to everyone. This will enable them to have greater oversight of the monitoring reports they are given. A governor said, 'I will use the governor engagement programme to be in the right place to ask questions of the right people.'

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: SC059709

Principal/CEO: Mrs Ann Turner

Inspectors

Chris Scully, social care inspector

Denise Jolly, social care inspector

Marie Cordingley, social care inspector

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