

# Grantham College

Grantham College, Stonebridge Road, Grantham, Lincolnshire NG31 9AP

Inspection of residential provision

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this further education college with residential accommodation

Grantham College is a small college located in the centre of Grantham. It provides further, higher and adult education courses. Residential accommodation for young people who are under 18 consists of 46 en-suite bedrooms, grouped into six shared flats, in a three-storey, purpose-built accommodation block.

Inspection dates 30 January to 1 February 2018

**Overall experiences and progress of young people, taking in account** requires improvement to be good

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers requires improvement to be good

The college is not yet delivering good help and care for young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

**Date of last inspection:** 17 March 2015

## Key findings from this inspection

This college requires improvement to be good because:

- Leaders and managers do not have effective oversight of the residential provision.
- There is no link governor for the residential provision. This adds to the lack of oversight and quality assurance.
- Parents are not informed immediately when their children have been at risk of harm.
- Staff do not have regular reviews of their practice. They have not consistently followed the college's policies and procedures.
- The contemporaneous logbook for daily activities that take place in the residential provision is not well written, and is difficult to understand. Managers have not challenged the quality of this document.
- Young people complained to inspectors about the quality of the provision. They did not feel that they would be listened to if they raised their concerns with the college.
- Potential hazards were identified around the residential provision.
- Some equipment and fittings are damaged or broken.
- Young people do not have a large indoor space where they can meet up with the college's wider residential community.

The college's strengths:

- Staff have good relationships with young people. Young people say that they can talk to most staff about their problems.
- Young people make academic and sporting progress that is as good as, or better than, their peers nationally.
- Young people generally enjoy residential life and form good friendships with other young people.
- Young people appreciate the independence that self-catering gives them. There are good systems for ensuring that food is stored safely.
- Senior staff have responsibility for safeguarding in this college. This means that safeguarding concerns are addressed by experienced and well-trained staff.

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

### Recommendations

- Ensure a senior member of the college's staff regularly monitors the college's records for accommodation and identify any issues requiring action. (NMS 21.1)
- Ensure students have access to a range and choice of safe recreational areas, both indoors and outdoors. This specifically refers to a number of hazards outlined within the report. (NMS 41.1)
- Ensure students' accommodation and its furniture, fittings and equipment are generally free from breakages and from numerous or significant items requiring maintenance. (NMS 36.3)
- Ensure staff contact parents concerning major welfare concerns relating to students. (NMS 18.4)
- Ensure staff with responsibilities for supervision of residential students or provision of student welfare services have relevant qualifications and/or experience and competence for the tasks and level of responsibility they undertake. (NMS 30.3)

### Points for improvement

- Provide staff working in the accommodation with regular reviews of their boarding practice through one-to-one meetings with their managers. This will provide them with the oversight and guidance they need to provide the best possible support to young people. (Linked to NMS 30.8)
- Provide further opportunities for young people to be able to express their views about the accommodation. (Linked to 12.1)
- Ensure leaders and managers have clear development plans for the accommodation, and provide effective oversight of the provision. (Linked to NMS 8.1)
- Consider having a link governor for the accommodation. (Linked to 8.3)
- Consider providing a safe space where all young people can socialise. For example, a large common room. This will enhance the social experience for young people. (Linked to NMS 41.2)

## Inspection judgements

### Overall experiences and progress of young people: requires improvement to be good

Young people complained to inspectors about the facilities provided in the accommodation. They said that:

- ceiling tiles are broken
- fridges do not work properly and are damaged
- ovens are not working properly
- showers can be 'temperamental'
- the wi-fi is poor.

Although a lot of refurbishment work has been completed, and the college is planning to address some of the issues mentioned by young people, changes are slow to be implemented.

Young people have some opportunities to express their views about the service. For example, they can access the college's student council or directly contact the chief executive. Young people and their parents can also complete a survey about their accommodation experience. However, young people feel that little changes when they put forward their views. There is not currently a dedicated forum for young people who are in accommodation. This is something that young people said they would find helpful.

Young people mostly enjoy residential life and make good friendships. However, they complained that they do not know many people outside their own flats. Each flat has a communal kitchen/dining room with a television. This allows for a small number of young people to congregate. However, there is not an area that provides enough space for them to do activities as a group, such as a large common room. Young people said they would like a safe indoor space where they could socialise with the wider group.

Young people make good progress academically, and in their chosen sports. For example, some young people from the table tennis academy play for the England team.

Young people talk about most staff positively. A young person said: 'Most of them are helpful and give us advice.' Staff generally have positive relationships with young people. Young people say that there are staff they can speak to about their problems. They also have access to a mental health adviser and a counsellor. Young people who become ill are looked after appropriately.

A range of activities is offered. These include cultural enrichment activities such as celebrating Chinese New Year. Young people have also been bowling, and have taken part in cooking evenings, quiz nights, a barbeque and cinema nights. Some young people say they prefer to 'chill with their friends'.

Young people appreciate the independence that self-catering provides them. Staff closely monitor young people's ability to live independently. They intervene appropriately to ensure good hygiene and healthy eating.

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

In one instance, young people were not provided with sufficient care or protection. Accommodation staff did not follow college procedures, including the missing-from-home procedure, when young people went off-site late at night and did not return until the following morning. When the young people returned from being out all night, staff did not ensure their welfare. For example, they did not offer them food or a drink, and did not ask if they needed medical attention.

Parents were not informed about this incident by the college until after the young people concerned had attended formal disciplinary meetings, approximately six days later. This means that parents did not have the opportunity to immediately address this incident with their children or discuss the issue with accommodation staff.

A manager promptly addressed the safeguarding concerns with some of the staff involved. However, there has not been a reflective review of the incident with all staff, to share learning points and prevent a similar incident taking place.

Hazards in the environment mean that young people are put at risk of harm. Hazards include:

- damaged and rusty microwaves
- unlocked doors to water tanks
- damp leaves outside an external fire exit that may mean young people slip while trying to escape a fire
- not checking that emergency lighting is in accordance with standards
- propping open fire doors

However, young people say that they feel safe. They do not report bullying or intimidation as an issue.

Senior staff have responsibility for safeguarding in this college. This means that safeguarding concerns are addressed by experienced and well-trained staff. There are regular safeguarding team meetings, which means that those with safeguarding responsibilities are sharing safeguarding concerns. This enhances the college's ability to respond to safeguarding concerns.

Vetting procedures help to protect young people from unsuitable adults.

## **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good**

Leaders and managers do not have an in-depth understanding of boarding practice. Leaders who are responsible for accommodation have recently come into post.

Some have been, or are, working part-time and responsibility for accommodation is only a small part of their job role. This has meant that the implementation of changes has been slow and the oversight of the accommodation has not been effective. For example, the development plan does not provide clear direction and does not set meaningful improvement objectives. There is no dedicated forum for resident young people to air their views and there are no formal systems for reviewing the practice of accommodation staff.

Accommodation staff work most of their shifts on their own. This can be quite isolating, and can lead to inconsistent practice. Staff discuss their development during an annual appraisal meeting, and have regular informal chats with managers. However, they do not have regular formal meetings with their managers about their boarding practice. This has limited the ability of managers to promote consistent, high-quality practice.

Staff complete relevant training in topics such as health and safety, safeguarding children, fire safety and autism. This helps to give them the knowledge and skills that they require to work in the residential provision.

Records are of a poor quality, in particular the contemporaneous logbook where all activity for each shift is recorded. This makes it difficult to understand the records. Furthermore, some recording is inappropriate because the staff members' personal frustrations with young people are made clear. The quality and content of the handwritten records are not challenged by managers.

Governors are supportive of the college and there is a good relationship between leaders and the governing body. Safeguarding is a high priority for leaders and governors. However, the governing body do not have a link governor for accommodation. This would enhance the managerial oversight and governance of accommodation.

## **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:** SC039105

**Principal/CEO:** Linda Houtby

### **Inspectors**

Joanne Vyas, social care inspector

Phillip Morris, social care inspector

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