

# Sparsholt College Hampshire

Sparsholt College, Sparsholt, Winchester, Hampshire SO21 2NF

Inspection of residential provision

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this further education college with residential accommodation

Sparsholt College is a Specialist Further Education College providing education in land and environment. Accommodation for 16 to 18-year-old students is available in halls of residence on the campus. There are currently 200 residential students under the age of 18.

Inspection dates      15 to 17 May 2018

<b>Overall experiences and progress of young people,</b> taking in account	<b>outstanding</b>
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How well young people are helped and protected	outstanding
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
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The college provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the college contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for young people.

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** outstanding

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

## Key findings from this inspection

This college is outstanding because:

- Senior leaders and managers are highly competent, experienced and confident in maintaining an inspirational culture in which residential students thrive.
- The residential students live in an inclusive and supportive community which enriches their experiences and positively influences their development.
- All the staff work collaboratively and share a common purpose to help each individual student achieve their full potential.
- The residential staff and the support staff recognise and respond to the students' individual needs. They recognise the importance of emotional well-being and provide effective support to help students develop resilience and coping strategies in times of difficulty.
- The leaders and managers are committed to the continuous development of the residential provision to improve the residential experience for students through ongoing monitoring, learning from practice and feedback.
- Safeguarding the residential students is at the heart of the staff's practice. Comprehensive training for the staff and effective systems for identifying and responding to concerns about the residential students promote the residential students' welfare. A sharp focus on educating the residential students to keep themselves safe is clearly evident.

The college's areas for development:

- Fully embed systems to ensure that the residential staff receive regular individual reviews of their practice.
- Ensure that records consistently and clearly demonstrate the resolution and outcome of complaints.

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

### **Recommendations**

- Ensure that residential staff receive regular reviews of their practice.
- Ensure that records consistently and clearly demonstrate the resolution and outcome of the complaint.

## **Inspection judgements**

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

Residential students benefit from living in an inclusive and supportive community which enriches their experiences and positively influences their development. The committed staff focus on the individual needs of residential students and provide the levels of support for them to succeed and achieve to the best of their ability. Residential students demonstrate higher achievement levels than non-residential students. Residential students make excellent progress in developing self-confidence, independence and social skills.

The staff across the college work collaboratively to support the residential students in all aspects of their lives. Pastoral support for the students is particularly strong. Close communication between academic, residential and student support staff ensures that support for the residential students is swiftly and effectively put in place to assist their progress.

Residential students have access to excellent support for their health needs. A suitably skilled, experienced and qualified nurse is developing the health service in the college. In addition to ensuring that specialist support is available to meet specific medical needs, broader support is provided to address sexual health and relationship education.

The staff have a continuous focus on the well-being of the residential students and their emotional and mental health. Support for the residential students is easily accessible through counselling and referrals to specialist external provision when necessary. The staff are alert to signs of emotional distress, anxiety and stress and the staff are trained to provide appropriate support. This strong aspect of the pastoral support helps the residential students develop resilience and coping strategies. The residential students are positive about their relationships with the staff and they are confident in approaching the staff and seeking help, advice and guidance, knowing that they will receive a response to help them move forward.

Residential students are influential in decision-making around residential issues. Student representatives are active in putting forward ideas and views through the Residents Voice forum. They are confident and at ease in expressing their views, knowing that the staff take their opinions seriously and take appropriate action. The catering manager is responsive to feedback from the residential students, even involving them in sausage-tasting sessions. Plans are in place to introduce a residential student council shortly in

order to strengthen consultation with the residential students.

A range of enrichment activities and social events are available for the residential students, encouraging them to be active and responsible participants in residential community life. Helping the residential students to develop new friendships, widen their social experiences and learn new skills enhances their experience, develops their confidence and self-esteem and their appreciation of a healthy work/life balance. Some residential students commented that the activity programme could be improved. Managers are aware of their views and are reviewing the range of activities available.

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

Safeguarding residential students is embedded in all aspects of college life. An extremely strong safeguarding ethos is inherent in all the staff's practice, ensuring that the residential students' safety and well-being is predominant.

Led by a skilled and experienced designated safeguarding lead, the team of safeguarding officers is proactive and responds effectively to all concerns raised. Effective systems are in place for the staff to raise concerns about the residential students. Appropriate referrals are made to external safeguarding agencies when necessary. Safeguarding concerns are closely analysed by managers to identify trends and to monitor the staff's practice. Managers ensure that the staff implement targeted, protective strategies.

Regardless of their role, all the college staff undertake safeguarding training to enable them to identify and report concerns. All are vigilant in recognising and appropriately referring issues. A governor with specific responsibility for overseeing safeguarding practice in the college provides an additional level of oversight and scrutiny to ensure that safeguarding practices are effective.

Safeguarding training for key support staff is wide ranging and frequently updated so that they have the necessary knowledge and awareness of the current risks that the students may face and are able to implement protective strategies. Educating the residential students to keep themselves safe is a priority. Particular focus on e-safety, radicalisation and extremism ensures that the staff and the students understand the risks. Proactive and constructive relationships with external agencies provide the safeguarding team with expert advice and assistance to support students who are at risk of harm.

The staff have a genuine interest in the residential students' welfare. Systems are continually developing to ensure that staff recognise the individual needs and specific vulnerabilities of the residential students and provide the necessary level of wide-ranging support. The residential students develop positive relationships with the staff, who know them very well and are readily available to talk to them. Knowing that the staff listen and respond, the residential students accept the support that the staff offer and make significant personal development. The residential students spoken to said that they feel safe living at the college and acknowledged the positive support that they receive from the residential wardens.

The staff consistently promote positive behaviour through clear boundaries and high expectations that the residential students will take responsibility for themselves and act

respectfully while living in a community.

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

Senior leaders and managers are highly competent, experienced and confident in maintaining an inspirational culture in which students thrive. Their guidance and direction unites the staff in providing support for the students to recognise and achieve their full potential. All the staff share a common aim of providing an excellent residential experience for the students to enhance their learning outcomes and make significant personal and social development to advance their future life chances.

The residential students benefit from support staff who are professional and committed to providing them with the appropriate levels of assistance and guidance, so that the residential students can succeed and develop confidence in their own abilities. The residential support staff complete a wide range of training to meet the diverse needs of the residential students, with a sharp focus on safeguarding them and promoting their well-being. Annual performance reviews identify the development and training needs of individual staff members in order to develop the team to enrich the experience of residential students. Termly, one-to-one sessions with managers have recently been introduced to improve the structured support for the staff. This is not yet embedded.

All the staff work together to support the individual needs of the residential students. The residential and the support staff share information with pastoral tutors to ensure that residential students receive comprehensive and consistent support. The staff and leaders demonstrate a detailed knowledge and understanding of the residential students' specific vulnerabilities and particular support needs. Consequently, the residential students receive appropriate and responsive support to advance their personal development and their learning objectives.

The leaders and managers continuously strive to improve the experience for the residential students. Support for the residential students is constantly under review. Recent developments have included a new system for recording and sharing information, concerns and student support needs. Leaders and managers are acutely aware of the increasing needs of the students relating to their mental health. Support in this area has been strengthened to develop the students' resilience and emotional well-being. Plans are shortly to be implemented to improve the activity programme for residential students and enhance the life skills programme to prepare the residential students for adult life.

The leaders and managers work collaboratively and professionally with external agencies, sharing information effectively, particularly in relation to safeguarding matters, to promote and protect the well-being of the students. They are committed to ongoing monitoring and review of the quality of help and support for the residential students. Learning from practice, significant events and feedback are inherent in their drive to improve the experience and progress of students. Complaints are thoroughly investigated, though there is a lack of consistency in recording the resolution and outcome of the complaint.

## **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:** SC061177

**Principal/CEO:** Tim Jackson

### **Inspectors**

Janet Hunnam, social care inspector

Liz Driver, social care inspector

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