

Loughborough College

Loughborough College of Further Education, Radmoor Road, Loughborough,
Leicestershire LE11 3BT

Inspection of residential provision

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this further education college with residential accommodation

This is a further education college located in Leicestershire. The college offers a range of courses, including further education, higher education, apprenticeships and professional qualifications. The college provides residential provision on the college campus, with mixed single accommodation.

Young people aged under 18 are accommodated separately to those who are 18 or over. Young people have en-suite single rooms with self-catering facilities.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021.

Inspection dates: 2 to 4 November 2021

Overall experiences and progress of young people, taking into account **outstanding**

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **outstanding**

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.

Date of last inspection: 16 January 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of young people: outstanding

Young people who reside at this college receive excellent care and support. This is provided by a dedicated, committed and highly motivated team of accommodation support staff. Care and support are tailored to the individual needs of the young people. This process begins prior to young people arriving on campus, with a detailed assessment of their needs. The induction process for new young people is well considered. Each young person receives a 'welcome bag' of essential items to make them feel at home. Events take place to help them make friends quickly. For some young people who may have increased anxiety, the staff amend their induction to take this into account. Staff help them overcome their worries and to quickly settle into college life. One parent said of the induction process, 'It was absolutely brilliant.'

Some young people are elite athletes. They are provided with specialist support through the provision of a sports mentor. Additionally, nutritional and psychological support are available. Leaders of the college have embraced the talented athlete scheme. This scheme is funded by the college. Leaders know that this helps young people achieve excellence in their chosen sport.

The academic progress of young people who stay in residence is outstanding. Young people achieve excellent attendance. The residential staff help and encourage young people to complete the required academic work to remain on track for successful outcomes. One parent said: 'They [the college staff] have harnessed his [the young person's] abilities and strengths and, for the first time, he feels he's achieving, which has been great for his self-esteem and confidence.'

Leaders, managers and staff go above and beyond to care for young people's emotional and mental health. Residential support staff, staff who work in student support services and sports coaches work in a seamless manner, with very good communication that benefits young people. Some of the developments in the college that benefit young people are as follows:

- A trainee therapy dog has been introduced in the residential provision. Young people have benefited greatly from this.
- Young people are offered breakfast, free of cost, if required.
- During the COVID-19 lockdowns, young people were provided with free meals, and staff worked hard to support them during this difficult period.
- The college leaders have made sanitary items widely available, and free of cost, for young people, staff and visitors.

This demonstrates compassionate leadership, recognising the needs of young people staying in the residential provision and the wider college community.

How well young people are helped and protected: outstanding

Safeguarding young people is a priority. There are very good partnerships with external agencies. These agencies, such as mental health services, the local authority and drug and alcohol misuse services, have established relationships with the college. This means that services for young people can be provided very quickly, if required.

Young people's relationships are very good. Bullying is not tolerated, and young people are supportive of each other. They are empathetic and understand how hard it can be to leave home for the first time, and so provide mutual support. The young people know where to turn to for support and help. They report that the accommodation support staff are always available to them. The behaviour of young people is very good. Staff provide young people with clear expectations of behaviour, from the outset of their college life through to when they leave.

Residential support staff receive very thorough training to make sure they have the required knowledge and skills to respond to safeguarding concerns. The college has designated safeguarding lead roles. These staff understand their roles and responsibilities very well. They act quickly and decisively in response to any concerns.

Staff who work in the residential areas of the college are recruited in accordance with safer recruitment procedures. A safeguarding lead, or deputy, is always present on recruitment panels and throughout the recruitment process. The vetting process is comprehensive. The college undertakes enhanced disclosure checks and repeats checks regularly to be assured that staff remain suitable to work with young people.

Leaders of the college have established a clear working ethos that is underpinned by their core values of fairness, respect, equality, diversity, inclusion and engagement – also known as FREDIE. These values are central to the culture of the college. They are incorporated into the policies and procedures of the college and embedded in the practice of staff. Safeguarding young people is central to this culture.

College leaders responded decisively to the recent report by the Department for Education into child sexual violence and harassment in schools and colleges. The college has provided focused workshops for students on the issues raised in the report. Staff have ensured that young people attending the workshops have been given support throughout.

Leaders of the college undertake the required actions pertaining to health and safety. This ensures that both young people and staff are safe in the residential areas of the college. This could be further strengthened by reviewing all electrical items students bring into the college, to ensure that they meet the required health and safety standards.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

Leaders, managers and staff pay meticulous attention to detail. For example, leaders listen to young people's views through regular student voice meetings. Leaders are visible in the residential provision and residential student voice is reported to the governing body. The senior leadership team takes responsibility for the day-to-day running of the residential provision. This is because the senior leaders are passionate and aspire to improve the lives of young people and they value the residential staff supporting them.

The leadership team endeavours to make certain that the young people are inspired to learn and develop. For example, talks have been arranged from a Tokyo 2020 Olympic gold medal winner and a current women's international rugby player. Leaders know these opportunities both inspire young people to excel in their chosen sporting area and ground them in the reality of working hard to achieve their ambitions.

College governors are robust in their support and challenge to leaders. The college has a governor with responsibility for the residential provision and safeguarding. He is a regular visitor to the residential area and demonstrates an in-depth understanding of the residential provision. Governors, leaders and managers show ambition to improve further, with the ongoing development of the provision. The residential provision has had an overhaul in many areas, including kitchens, bathrooms and communal areas. This development work continues because leaders want to ensure that young people are provided with the best possible accommodation to support their studies.

Leaders, managers and governors all place diversity and equality at the centre of their practice, and as a core value of the college. They value and celebrate individual identity. Young people who are part of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (or questioning) (LGBTQ+) community can access support, advice and guidance. Young people who have come to the college from overseas are welcomed and they bring new ideas from their cultures, which adds vibrancy to the residential provision and the college more broadly.

Very good quality assurance systems are fundamental to the leadership and management of the residential provision. For example, leaders seek the views of young people during the application and induction process. Young people can provide their views on any aspect of their experience at the college. Leaders and governors are proactive in seeking the views of young people and acting on these, where possible. College leaders also seek feedback from key partner agencies, such as sports governing bodies and employers. This feedback is overwhelmingly positive, with one sports partner stating, 'The college provides a world-class service.'

What does the college need to do to improve?

Recommendation

- The college leadership should consider keeping an inventory of electrical items brought into the residential provision by young people, and assess whether any item requires PAT (portable appliance testing) and take any actions required.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of young people, 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: SC043659

Principal/CEO: Jo Maher

Inspectors

Phillip Morris, Social Care Inspector

Joanne Vyas, Social Care Inspector

Sarah Orriss, Social Care Inspector

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