

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 a specialist land-based 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 young people, 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 35 resident young people aged under 18. A significant number of them contributed to this inspection.

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: 8 to 10 February 2022

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.

Date of last inspection: 5 December 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of young people: good

Young people are happy and enjoy their residential experience. They make good progress on their courses compared to their peers. They feel safe. They receive a good induction that helps them settle into residential life quickly.

Young people enjoy the wide range of activities and events that are organised for them. One young person, who was struggling to join in activities, has been actively encouraged and has now started to join in. Another young person, with a sensory impairment, said that an activity was adapted especially for him to enable him to participate. And another young person said she likes living in residence and has made many friends while there. This was echoed by all the young people spoken to.

Young people are encouraged to express their views. They feel listened to, and action is taken where possible. Staff have regular meetings with young people and they involve young people in focus groups. Feedback from young people is clearly valued and acted upon.

Data clearly demonstrates that young people in the residential provision achieve better in their studies overall than young people who are not living at the college. Young people in the residential provision maintain their college attendance and have high achievement rates.

Mental health has been a focus for leaders in relation to staff and young people. The college has replaced its therapeutic staff with a well-being team. They are focusing on self-help by using a mental health app that young people can access all day, every day. This new approach is providing a fuller mental health service for all young people rather than offering a service that only reaches a few.

The physical environment is functional, safe and secure. Maintenance issues have not been consistently resolved in a timely way, but this has improved since Christmas.

How well young people are helped and protected: good

Young people say they feel safe in the residential provision and this view is reiterated by their parents. A range of security measures and 24-hour support mean young people have access to help whenever this is needed.

Young people have positive relationships with the staff team and will talk to staff about any concerns they have. One young person said, 'The wardens, they are so friendly, everyone is just comfortable with them.'

Any concerns raised are responded to in an appropriate and supportive way by the residential team. For example, a young person was unhappy in the residential block

she had been allocated. She shared her concerns with a warden and was able to move. She is much more settled and has made good friendships now in her new residential block.

The management of risk is good. This is because the staff team knows the young people well. Planning and assessment of risk begins prior to young people arriving at college and is a continuous process throughout their time there. When necessary, external agencies are contacted to provide additional support and advice. Young people have access to a range of professionals, including a 24-hour emotional and mental health support line.

There are policies and guidelines in place designed to protect young people and keep them safe. Young people are aware of the boundaries and expectations of behaviour and how to keep themselves and others safe. There have been no issues around young people going missing or any major incidents. Young people are helped to resolve conflicts and adapt to living and sharing with other young people. A young person spoke about his experience of being bullied in his previous school. He said that his experience at college is very positive and no-one bullies him, because of the warden's support.

There has been a recent emphasis on developing knowledge and understanding of peer-on-peer abuse and how this could impact on young people. Young people have attended talks and additional internet monitoring systems have been put in place to identify any concerns at the earliest opportunity. There has been a recent rise in the reporting of peer-on-peer abuse because of better understanding in this area.

Records for young people do not always contain all relevant information, for example, guardianship arrangements and contact details for international young people.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The senior leadership team is new since the last inspection and has made many improvements. Leaders and managers have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses. They use a wealth of data to inform their decisions and practice. They have commissioned several external quality assurance reviews and are taking action to address shortfalls and further improve the service.

The residential offer for young people has continued to improve since the last inspection. There has been a restructuring of the residential team and a student experience coordinator has been employed, who organises regular activities and events. This has been a positive engagement and proved very popular with young people.

A new system for reporting maintenance issues has been introduced, with a QR code in each room. Young people like this system and have said that they do not even have to get out of bed to report a concern now. It has much improved the reporting of maintenance issues.

Leaders are showing a commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI). They have implemented, or have plans to implement, strategies to promote a positive approach to diversity. For example, staff and young people can choose to wear pronoun badges to make it easier for someone to know how they would like to be addressed. People can also wear rainbow lanyards if they wish. They are in the process of appointing diversity champions across college to further improve the EDI offer.

Governors offer good support and challenge. There is not currently a link governor for residence but governors focus on the residential provision when they look at each curriculum area. They have not been able to visit the residential blocks since September last year because of COVID-19 restrictions but have a good understanding of the issues facing the provision and the plans to continually improve it.

Good cross-college communication means that there is a holistic approach to the care and education of young people. For example, teaching staff are informed quickly if a young person is unable to attend due to illness and wardens are informed if a young person is not in a lesson. Wardens are then able to find out why a young person is not in class.

Staff retention is good because staff feel well supported. Staff receive clinical supervision termly to ensure that their emotional well-being is supported. Staff training ensures that staff have a good range of skills and knowledge to carry out their role effectively.

Residential staff have not always been proactive in looking at issues that may affect a student's emotional well-being. For example, college policy means that some young people on equine courses are not able to ride because of their weight. Although one-to-one support is provided each term to check on a student's well-being and progress, staff have not asked these young people how they feel about this, so they can provide appropriate support. Furthermore, cultural differences have not been considered when evaluating why a young person asked to move out of a residential block.

Parents are very happy with the residential provision. They say that staff communicate well with them and that they feel that their child is safe. One parent said about the warden team, 'They are actually fantastic. They have been brilliant with other son as well.'

What does the college need to do to improve?

Points for improvement

- Ensure all relevant contact details for guardians are recorded on young people's files. (Linked to NMS 13.9)
- Staff should fully consider the emotional health of young people in relation to friendship groups and the impact of cultural differences, and college policy that may prevent young people from fully participating in their chosen course. (Linked to NMS 3.1)

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: SC042117

Principal/CEO: Corrie Harris

Inspectors

Joanne Vyas, Social Care Inspector

Sarah Orriss, Social Care Inspector

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