

# Bridgwater and Taunton College

Bridgwater College, Cannington Centre for Land Based Studies, Cannington, Bridgwater, Somerset TA5 2LS

Inspection of residential provision

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## **Information about this further education college with residential accommodation**

Bridgwater and Taunton College provides residential accommodation at the Cannington site. At the time of the inspection, 52 full time students and nine block release under 18 students were living in lodges there.

Each lodge accommodates up to 10 students. Each room has full en-suite facilities. There are communal facilities in each lodge, including a kitchen and lounge.

Students aged under 18 are accommodated mainly in the week during term time. Flexi-boarding is available by arrangement.

### **Inspection dates: 10 to 12 October 2022**

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

How well young people are helped and protected      good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers      good

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:** 9 May 2017

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** outstanding

## Inspection judgements

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

Residential students make exceptional social, emotional and educational progress from their starting points. The inspectors found an extensive range of learning opportunities, both land based and academic, and an enrichment package that provides extra-curricular activities. The residential team encourages students to engage in these and they monitor those who are not taking part. This helps prevent students from becoming isolated or excluded.

Records for the students who left in the last academic year show a high success rate in attendance and achievement. In particular, there were impressive successes among those students who had a background of being challenged with learning and who had poor school attendance.

Communication and links between the residential and academic staff are excellent. Regular meetings allow for additional support to be offered to students who may be struggling in either setting and/or with being away from home for the first time. Students receive excellent care and support from the well-being team, which is generally individualised and inclusive. This allows the students to build meaningful, trusting relationships with the staff.

Residential students are supported by a professional team who actively embrace diversity and inclusion. They benefit from mentor support, counselling and well-being guidance at any time of the day or night. Students spoken to said that they enjoyed living on campus. They reported being very well supported by the residential team, particularly with their emotional well-being.

Parents of residential students were, in the main, extremely positive about the opportunities that are available, and the significant impact these have had on their children's educational outcomes. Parents spoke of provision for supporting well-being as excellent. One said that, one week on from starting, their daughter is 'happier than I have seen her in years'.

The quality of the accommodation for students is, in the main, very good and in some parts it is excellent. However, some of the older residential areas require refurbishment to ensure there is parity for all residential students.

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

Residential students told the inspectors that they feel safe. They trust the staff and know who they can speak with if they have concerns.

The safety of residential students is central to the ethos of the college. Safeguarding incidents are rare but when they do occur, for example, when a student makes an allegation or is missing from the campus, responses by staff to safeguard the

student are swift and appropriate. However, the inspectors found that some records did not reflect the good practice by the staff and some care plans were generic. They did not provide the staff with sufficient strategies to support a learner following an incident.

Risk is well managed through assessment and planning at the application stage. Students are encouraged to take age-appropriate risks, and many develop confidence and greater independence through participating in activities. However, the inspectors found that on one occasion there was insufficient professional curiosity regarding the needs and abilities of a student. This included failing to communicate with the local authority to establish a greater understanding of the potential needs and risks.

Students do not often go missing and action is taken when they are not where they should be in the day and evening. However, records seen for one student suggest there should have been a better response due to current safeguarding concerns around the student.

Work on maintenance and health and safety issues at the Cannington residential accommodation is led by an experienced and dedicated team. They spoke passionately of their roles and demonstrated a commitment to ensuring the accommodation and campus are maintained in good order and kept safe. Accidents, repairs and work are recorded on a system that ensures senior managers in the estates team have immediate and robust oversight. Health and safety is given the diligence it requires. This means fire checks and safety checks are up to date and measures are in place to support students who require a personal emergency evacuation plan or specialist support.

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

Leaders, managers and staff all have an ambitious vision for the progress and outcomes of the residential students. They are committed to the students. As a result, the students are making impressive progress, have access to a vast range of learning opportunities and are supported by a skilled and passionate well-being team.

Inspectors found that a few opportunities have been missed by leaders and managers to fully understand the needs of their students. However, these have not impacted on the safeguarding or academic outcomes of the students.

Recording and reviewing systems currently in place do not allow for full oversight of all information held. Therefore, some information is not being processed or used to its full advantage. This is an area for development to prevent students being at risk of harm to their welfare.

Leaders and managers demonstrated an excellent understanding of college's strength's and weaknesses. However, they recognised that they were not wholly aware of the few shortfalls identified by the inspectors. The business strategy plan is

comprehensive and detailed. There is, however, a need for senior leaders to review the expenditure allocated to the refurbishment of the accommodation in order to prevent any further delays.

The staff told inspectors that they enjoy their work and they feel respected and valued. They hold the senior leaders in high regard and commented on the positive outcomes for the residential students. In particular, they spoke of the support they receive in relation to training and supervision. Specialist training is provided quickly in response to the specific needs of the students. Staff also have a wealth of activity based qualifications which enables them to provide varied and exciting activities to students.

Three recommendations are made following this inspection. The shortfalls have not adversely affected the outstanding outcomes and progress made by residential students.

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

### **Recommendations**

- Leaders and managers must ensure that the records specified in Appendix 2 are maintained and monitored by the college and action take as appropriate. ('Further education residential accommodation: national minimum standards', page 14, paragraph 13.8)
- Leaders and managers must ensure that the issues specified in Appendix 3 are monitored, and action is taken to improve outcomes for students under 18 as appropriate. ('Further education residential accommodation: national minimum standards', page 14, paragraph 13.9)
- Leaders and managers must ensure that there is an effective working relationship between the college and local services, including local authority children's or adult services and the police, especially whenever suspicion or allegations of abuse have occurred. ('Further education residential accommodation: national minimum standards', page 12, paragraph 11.3)

### **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:** SC045170

**Principal/CEO:** Andy Berry

### **Inspectors**

Linda Bond, Social Care Inspector

Penelope Kutz, Social Care Inspector

Kerry Fell, Social Care Inspector

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