

# Brockenhurst College

Lyndhurst Road, Brockenhurst, Hampshire SO42 7ZE

Inspection of the residential provision

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

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

Brockenhurst College is a general further education college situated in the New Forest National Park, with its main site in Brockenhurst. The college has a construction and marine skills centre in Marchwood and a sixth form beauty centre in New Milton, and provides education and training to communities throughout the local area. Courses range from entry level to higher education and the college manages a number of apprenticeships.

All the residential learners stay with homestay hosts and are from overseas. There were 48 residential learners staying at the time of this inspection.

### **Inspection dates: 20 to 22 February 2024**

**Overall experiences and progress of young people, taking in 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:** 11 February 2020

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

## Inspection judgements

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

Learners thrive in a community where they are valued and nurtured. The ethos across the campus is inclusive and welcoming of different beliefs, cultures and backgrounds. International learners are seen as a unique and valued asset that enriches the whole college community.

The needs of each learner are assessed by staff from the international team prior to their arrival. This means that placements with homestay hosts can be carefully planned. Homestay hosts refer to the learners as being part of the family and learners confirm this. Consequently, long-term, meaningful relationships develop, which last over a number of years.

Through the careful matching and support given to homestay placements, learners settle and make considerable progress. This matching process not only increases learners' academic success, but also their opportunity to experience life and culture in the United Kingdom.

Learners' views and opinions have a clear impact. Annual surveys ensure that any wider issues are known, and senior leaders respond to these. This has had a positive impact in areas such as the availability of communal areas, suitability of Wi-Fi and ongoing reviews of timetables. When things cannot be responded to immediately, plans are made to address issues over the year.

Specific homestay reviews occur at regular intervals. Learners are consulted about what it is like living with their host families and talk confidently about their experiences. Learners are unanimously positive about their homestay hosts and families, saying things such as, 'I love them', 'I cannot express how glad I am to be here', and 'The hosts are perfect.'

Physical and mental well-being is given high priority. There is a common understanding that, for learners to be able to learn effectively, they need to feel well. To support this, the college has developed a multi-disciplinary well-being team.

Referrals for the well-being service are assessed to identify the most suitable course of action. This may involve sessions with the counselling team, ongoing support from the well-being team or signposting to external agencies such as child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS). A 'learner toolkit' developed by the well-being team in conjunction with local CAMHS has been embraced by learners and teachers alike. This has had a positive impact on learners' emotional well-being and is helping them to build resilience and develop coping skills that will be valuable to them as they go on to university, further education and employment. Leaders are mindful of the impact of increasing independence, so there is a series of step-down interventions available to learners to ensure that they are not left feeling isolated should counselling come to an end.

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

Learners' safety is given the upmost priority. Their individual vulnerabilities are known, and strategies are in place to ensure that they are safe. Well-organised inter-departmental liaison ensures that all vulnerabilities of learners are identified and addressed swiftly and effectively.

International learners' feedback was unanimously positive about their time and experience at the college. All presented as motivated and able to express their opinions. Importantly, they all said that they feel safe and welcome. None felt that they had experienced bullying, and all know who they can turn to for support if they are worried. They spoke of being listened to and feel that swift action is taken if they raise any concerns. This helps them to trust the adults around them and gives them a stable base.

International learners are well prepared for life in the United Kingdom. They are taught about differences in culture and law that they may have to adjust to when they come from their own countries. This helps them to behave accordingly and know what to do in college and in the community. Importantly, learners are educated about risks. This includes how to keep safe online, how to recognise risks relating to exploitation and how to promote their (and their peers') emotional well-being. The promotion of resilience and mental health well-being is a significant strength. The offer from the well-being department is of a particularly high standard.

Homestay hosts and staff across the college benefit from detailed training in recognising the signs of exploitation and radicalisation. Cohesive approaches to protecting vulnerable learners mean that risks are well managed. Specialist support from external services is sought when this is required.

Recruitment processes for permanent staff and host families are rigorous, ensuring that learners are supported by appropriate adults. Continued follow-ups with homestay hosts ensure that the quality of the home and the continued safety of learners are assessed. Learners and homestay hosts know what to do and who to contact should any concerns arise.

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

Leaders have high expectations for both learners and members of staff. Leaders are particularly ambitious for homestay learners. This enables them to succeed beyond their peers who are not in homestay. The impact and quality of the homestay provision ensure that learners excel and thrive.

Leaders have fostered particularly strong partnerships with local agencies to support learners' safety and well-being. They are confident to professionally challenge partner agencies to promote the learners' best interests.

Leaders look outwardly to learn from other colleges. They ensure that they share their expertise with others and welcome scrutiny to improve outcomes for learners. For example, an independent safeguarding audit has been used to strengthen practice in areas such as mandatory training for new staff.

Homestay hosts receive training that prepares them for their role and ensures that they know how to support the learners in their care. Feedback, training and networking opportunities ensure that their skills and knowledge are appropriate, allowing them to fulfil their role to a high standard. A dedicated and experienced international team is always available to hosts should any concerns be raised.

Clear information-sharing and induction plans support learners, their families and their host families to get to know each other before a learner moves in. Once a learner has moved in, there are regular 'check-ins' with the learner and termly visits to see the hosts to address any concerns.

The self-assessment of the provision is reflective and realistic. Leaders know the strengths of their service as well as areas to develop. They continually improve the service, for example progressing the further development of emotional and mental health support for learners. The international provision has remained a source of stability and consistency throughout some recent leadership changes.

## **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:** 1251708

**Principal:** Helen Odhams

### **Inspectors**

Jennie Christopher, Social Care Inspector

Paul Taylor, Social Care Inspector

Mark Newington, Social Care Inspector

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