

North Kent College

Hadlow College, Tonbridge Road, Hadlow, Tonbridge, Kent TN11 0AL

Inspection of residential provision

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this further education college with residential accommodation

Hadlow College is the North Kent College site which specialises in land-based courses. It provides a range of vocational further education and higher education courses. All residential accommodation for students under the age of 18 is on the main site. The college has a new registration due to its acquisition by North Kent College in 2020. This is the first inspection under the new registration. Currently, there are 73 residential further education students.

Inspection dates: 11 to 13 June 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: not previously inspected

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of young people: outstanding

Residential students thrive because of the warm, caring and nurturing relationships that they have with the residential staff. Residential students are overwhelmingly positive about their time at the college and say it is like a family. They talk fondly about staff and are confident in approaching them. Students say that staff are like 'makeshift parents', who step in if needed, and are available any time of the day or night. Residential students say that they feel safe on campus, and that students are respectful of each other. Students would recommend the residential provision to others, saying they value making new and lifelong friends.

The college provides residential students with a safe and structured environment in which to learn. Leaders ensure that they provide residential students with the best possible opportunities when taking their courses.

Residential students make excellent progress academically, socially and emotionally. 'Live your best life' booklets encourage students' individual aspirations. In addition, the booklets and individual sessions with residential staff provide practical help and support in learning independent living skills. Residential students with complex needs have the same opportunities to succeed because of the dedicated support that they receive from the staff. Residential students leave the college well prepared, with the life skills to succeed in higher education or employment.

Catering staff know residential students well. They learn their names and greet residential students individually when they arrive for meals. Residential students like this and explain that it feels like someone is checking that they are alright. These staff also alert residential staff if someone misses too many meals. Residential students say that the food is varied and that if they do not like the choice of meals then the catering staff will always make them something else to eat.

Residential students enjoy a wide range of activities, with a different choice available each week. This includes a mixture of on-site and off-site activities. Larger events mark celebrations throughout the year, with residential students involved in their planning. Students talked enthusiastically about the end-of-term ball.

Block meetings are held regularly. These are opportunities to understand what issues might need fixing in the block and to get feedback about enrichment activities. Residential students can safely raise concerns or worries in these meetings. Staff conduct regular student surveys to understand residential students' experiences and seek suggestions for improvement. Residential staff routinely make changes because of the feedback provided. Complaints are well managed and students' views are taken seriously. Links with 'block reps' mean that students have another way to share their views with staff.

New residential students enjoy a taster visit to the college before their course begins. This offers them the opportunity to start to make new friends and familiarise themselves with the campus. This makes the transition in September easier for residential students. Students receive a comprehensive induction about the opportunities and expectations of the residential provision. Parents also receive information which helps reassure them about the support that their children will receive. An overhaul of the taster and induction approach means that residential students with emotional well-being or health needs are well supported. All staff have received necessary training to support students to manage their medical conditions.

Residential staff are seen as an integral part of the college well-being system. This ensures that residential students receive a consistent response to their needs and have a range of people that they can go to for support and reassurance. Residential students are provided with resources for self-help and are also signposted to other organisations. Staff encourage residential students to be as independent as they can but will support them as needed. Residential students can self-refer to counsellors. The wider college group employs several counsellors, which provides residential students with the opportunity to find someone who they work well with.

How well young people are helped and protected: outstanding

Residential students are confident and consistently say that they feel safe in college. Residential staff know the students extremely well and recognise when they are worried or upset. Residential students trust the staff, which adds to their sense of safety.

Responses to safeguarding concerns are incredibly strong. Links with the on-site and wider college safeguarding team lead to an effective response to any concerns that students raise. Residential staff know the processes to follow should they be concerned for a student's welfare and act promptly when they notice any changes in a student's behaviour.

Residential students have excellent support throughout the year to help them to understand the risks of exploitation and recognise if someone is grooming them. Professionals from a variety of agencies also visit the college and offer advice and guidance about relationships, sexual health and the impact of drugs and alcohol. A session about consent encouraged students to reflect on their experiences and led to many discussing healthy relationships with the staff team.

Residential students know the expectations relating to behaviour and adhere to these exceptionally well. When there are concerns, residential students feel confident to share these with staff. They know that staff will respond swiftly to stop any unwanted behaviour and help residential students to rebuild their relationships after a disagreement.

The estates and risk management team work collaboratively with the residential team to ensure that students' accommodation remains safe. The team understands the residential students well and recognises the different types of wear and tear to

the accommodation that might be expected. Good systems are in place to track and monitor routine maintenance, and priority is given to repairs required in the residential accommodation. There are good systems in place to record accidents and track outcomes.

Safer recruitment practice is strong. This ensures that residential students are not in contact with inappropriate people. A strictly enforced lanyard system means that staff and residential students know who is allowed in different areas of the college site. People using the public right of way through the college grounds are challenged if they stray from the designated paths.

Accommodation is suitable for the students' needs. Rooms offer sufficient space for students' belongings and a safe for valuables. Residential students enjoy personalising their rooms. Well-appointed kitchens offer residential students the option to make their own lunches. Leaders have invested in and upgraded the facilities to ensure that residential students enjoy safe and well-decorated accommodation.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The senior leadership team is highly aspirational for all residential students. They constantly seek student feedback and adapt courses and programmes as required. For example, changes have been made to the timings of yard and farm duties and individualised packages have been offered so that students can meet their desired goals.

Staff are equally aspirational and work tirelessly to support students to have the best possible experience and outcomes. They constantly seek to improve the residential experience, through networking with other land-based colleges, completing surveys and recognising changes in the industries that students will move on to.

Leaders recognise the importance of the residential experience in creating well-rounded young adults. They track and monitor the progress of all residential students, including after they leave. Over and above this, leaders seek to create an environment in which residential students build resilience and enjoy a homely and nurturing experience.

Students' records are highly detailed and linked together. Consequently, residential students can see their academic and residential progress.

Monitoring systems allow leaders to understand the progress that residential students make. Regular review meetings take place between the vice principal, assistant principal and residential manager. These meetings include discussions about individual residential students, as well as considering wider operational needs.

Leaders seek regular feedback from residential students and parents about their views of the residential experience. Parents are positive about the experience and

the communication with residential staff. The residential manager reviews the service delivered and identifies further areas for development. Development plans are constantly updated, and improvements since the last inspection are clear.

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: 2711352

Principal: David Glead

Inspectors

Jennie Christopher, Social Care Inspector
Clare Nixon, Social Care Inspector

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