

# Myerscough College

Myerscough College, Myerscough Hall, St. Michaels Road, Bilsborrow, Preston PR3 0RY

Inspection of residential provision

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

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

Myerscough College is a specialist land-based, science, engineering and sports college located near Preston in Lancashire. The main campus includes two farms, horticultural provision, ornamental gardens, two sports centres, a golf academy, sports pitches, engineering workshops, animal, equine, farriery, arboriculture and veterinary nursing facilities.

A new principal was appointed in September 2023. He oversees the head of care in her role, who has held this position for several years.

The college provides residential accommodation at its campus for students who are over the age of 16. All under 18 students are accommodated on the main college campus. They live in separate halls to those for over 18-year-old students. At the time of the inspection, there were 243 full time and 31 part time 16 to 18-year-old students accessing the residential provision. The inspectors only inspected the residential provision for 16- to 18-year-old students at the college.

### **Inspection dates: 18, 19 and 20 November 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:** 28 February 2022

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

## Inspection judgements

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

A stable, experienced, and suitably trained residential team offers warm, nurturing and empowering care that supports students to develop in all areas of their lives. Students have positive relationships with the residential staff. They feel comfortable in raising any problems, they feel listened to and can talk to staff when needed. Professional practice ensures that students are supported to continually make progress. Staying at the residential provision has enhanced students' lives. This is particularly prominent for students with additional needs, whose experience of staying at the residential has provided them with opportunities that they may otherwise not have had access to.

Students are welcomed to the residential provision through careful and considerate planning to ensure that their individual needs are met. Residential staff work collaboratively with parents to ensure that suitable arrangements are in place for students to live comfortably and any reasonable adjustments made.

From their starting points, students are encouraged to express their views, wishes and feelings. This is also promoted through the student voice representatives who effectively voice students' suggestions and requests. The senior leadership team consider changes that can be made to enhance students' experiences of the residential provision. This information is then conveyed back to student representatives so that they can share the outcomes with their peers.

Parents are very complimentary about the opportunities given to their children and the progress that they make. Students are supported to develop their independent living skills and social skills to prepare them for adulthood.

Students are encouraged to embrace their identities and because of this, they develop their self-confidence and emotional resilience. There is a structured programme of events and tutorials for students, to engage them in equality and diversity work, to promote inclusivity and to break down any cultural boundaries in the local community. For example, the college has undertaken specific learning to support students who are exploring their identity or are gender-transitioning.

An enrichment team ensures that students are provided with a variety of activities. Student feedback is actively sought to ensure that organised recreational activities capture the diverse needs of all students. A new student engagement officer has been integral in seeking students views about the activities they would enjoy. Consequently, students reported an improvement in the enrichment programme since the start of the new year.

Students engage in and enjoy their education. Effective partnership working between the residential and education staff ensures that necessary information is shared and students are supported to be punctual and committed to their studies.

There is a seamless collaboration between all college staff, where all act as equal partners in achieving improvement. Consequently, students' individual educational attainment figures show that they benefit from staying in the residential provision and the support they receive from residential staff.

There is a strong focus on the support and services available for students to promote positive mental health and wellbeing. The college's safeguarding team work together with the residential team to share current concerns and information. They use research and data-led evidence to identify trends and patterns to enable them to target their approach relatively and to determine the support and guidance that students benefit most from. In addition, a dedicated well-being team within the college is accessible to students. They work alongside external professionals, including a mental health support team, to provide information, support and resources for students.

Students are provided with a variety of food outlets that provide an assortment of different meal choices. Some students have requested that healthier food be available for after meal snacks and fresh food in the mini market to be available at weekends. The catering manager works closely with students and the senior leadership team to consider menu choices and student suggestions.

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

Safeguarding is of paramount importance in this college. It is central to everything that the college and residential staff do. Security arrangements ensure that the residential campus provides students with a strong sense of safety and protection. Residential staff provide students with clear and consistent boundaries, which means they are provided with a safe and predictable environment. Students respond positively to the rules that are in place. An effective on call system provides support for residential staff in their management of the safety and welfare of the students.

Leaders and managers have excellent oversight of safeguarding arrangements. Highly effective planning takes place to ensure that risks are well managed, and students are kept safe. The residential team ensure that discussions and tutorials with students take place to educate them about risks and keeping themselves safe.

Leaders and managers work collaboratively with other professionals and take a shared approach to managing risk. They demonstrate a transparent approach to sharing information with safeguarding professionals and challenge thresholds for safeguarding referrals when required.

Residential staff are kept up to date with students' changing risks, needs and potential concerns. They benefit from comprehensive safeguarding training and because of this they have an excellent understanding of their roles and responsibilities to safeguard students. This also extends to the cleaning staff who understand signs of risk for students. Incident management shows that residential staff are extremely proactive and follow students risk support plans. There is a consistently high level of information sharing with key professionals, both internal

and external. Regular welfare reviews and residential support meetings take place to monitor vulnerable students and to implement clear strategies to mitigate risks.

A team of designated managers have an excellent understanding of multi-agency safeguarding practice. They have the key responsibility for managing safeguarding concerns and provide continuous 24-hour safeguarding support to the residential provision. Designated managers and governors undertake a range of safeguarding training. Consequently, they have up-to-date knowledge in relation to managing a wide range of safeguarding issues and this is clearly articulated throughout the college. There is a highly transparent relationship between the residential managers and governors in relation to safeguarding concerns and practice. The chair and safeguarding governor routinely visit the residential provision, liaising with the designated managers to ensure that safeguarding practice is monitored consistently.

Behaviour management is exceptional. Students do not go missing from the residential provision. There are clear and well managed systems in place to support students to manage their curfews through evening welfare checks and a fob system that allows staff to monitor students whereabouts at night. A behaviour support and disciplinary system sets clear expectations and boundaries for students. It is taken seriously by the residential team and used proportionately. The students are responsive to this system and told inspectors that consequences used are fair.

When leaders and managers have identified child-on-child abuse, they are innovative in their approach to addressing the concerns. Investigation outcomes have been shared appropriately with additional professional bodies. Their approach to these concerns has set a precedent for other colleges and professionals in relation to excellent safeguarding practice, research-based practice and reflective learning. There is a rigorous approach to the prevention of bullying. A welfare team oversees the safeguarding system to ensure that a prompt and appropriate response is taken in relation to any bullying.

Complaints are taken seriously and well managed. When possible, a resolve is sought and communicated to the complainant. Leaders and managers use feedback and the outcomes of complaints to make changes to the management of the residential provision and to improve student's experiences. This has helped the residential team to maintain positive relationships with both students and their families.

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

The college leadership team is in a period of transition. A new principal and a new chair of the governing body have been appointed. The head of care is soon to leave her role. Interim arrangements are in place so that the transition of the role is carried out seamlessly. Despite this, there has been significant change and improvement in enabling a student-centred provision. Leaders share a vision of creating an empowering community and providing inclusive residential educational opportunities. All areas for improvement from the last social care inspection have been met.

Leaders and managers model and promote an open and transparent culture where diverse opinion is listened to, valued and considered. This has created a positive working and learning environment, where students and staff welfare is considered alongside continuous improvement.

Leaders and managers are ambitious and have high expectations for what students can achieve and the standards of care that help to build stronger futures for students. They understand student's progress and take steps to remedy any shortfalls in resources or help available to them.

Development plans detail how the college will continue to grow and develop. The residential provision is fully embedded within these plans. Effective consultation with all stakeholders and students, enables leaders and managers to identify areas for development within the residential provision. Improvement is driven by what students believe to be important to them, such as having more social areas and the opportunities to spend time safely with older students.

Departmental plans complement the broader whole-college plan and the shared principles and values. The plans ensure that data and opinion inform changes of direction and goal setting. In the last year leaders and managers have implemented systems that enable greater transparency, accountability and a strong focus on what the benefit may be for residential students. Governors are continuously advised about any changes or its impact, so that they are well informed before they provide approval.

The head of care has reviewed staff supervision arrangements. She has taken time to be on shift with staff. This has provided opportunities for informal feedback and reflective practice about staff performance. It has also provided an opportunity to reassure herself of their capabilities, relationships and values. Residential staff feel well supported in their role and the many opportunities provided to them to discuss their work.

Governors show a good understanding of safeguarding and are initiative-taking in their oversight of student's safety and well-being in the residential provision. The chair of governors routinely visits the residential provision. The governor responsible for safeguarding consults with the designated managers and takes their responsibilities seriously. The quality and standards committee receives regular updates and reports about the residential provision. They offer valuable support and challenge to enhance development plans presented by the college leaders.

## **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:** SC059709

**Principal/CEO:** Mr Wes Johnson

### **Inspectors**

Cheryl Field, Social Care Inspector  
Katie Tomlinson, Social Care Inspector  
Denise Jolly, Social Care Inspector



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