

Hadlow College

Tonbridge Road, Hadlow, Tonbridge 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. The former Hadlow College was dissolved and subsequently acquired by North Kent College in August 2020. All residential accommodation for students under the age of 18 is on the main site. Currently, there are 90 residential students.

Inspection dates: 22 to 24 February 2022

Overall experiences and progress of young people, taking into 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: 14 November 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of young people: good

Residential students are well supported through an individualised approach. Students say that it has been a life ambition to come to the college and it goes beyond their expectations. Residential staff enjoy their role and have a passion for helping the students to achieve their desired outcomes. Support staff across the campus, such as the catering staff, promote the family feel of the college with a naturally nurturing style.

Residential staff are proactive in supporting students who have additional work. Students also comment that they can approach staff for help at any time. Relationships with the residential support officers are based on mutual respect. Students are actively involved in the development of the college. Forums such as 'you said, we did', student surveys and the 'Course Reps' meeting are some of the means of obtaining student input for the day-to-day running of the college. Student-led initiatives include the LGBTQ+ group and a number of charity fundraising activities, such as the Christmas fair, lambing weekend and a range of other enriching activities engaging with the local community.

Planning prior to students moving into the residential accommodation is thoroughly considered, meeting each student's needs. This approach also allows for staff to recognise when a potential student is unlikely to be suitable for the course or residential. When it is recognised that a student cannot manage the curriculum or being away from home, they are supported well to explore alternatives, including continued access to careers advice. Students are supported in their natural progression to adulthood and to be industry-ready for employment.

Residential students are encouraged to lead healthy lifestyles, which is essential given the manual nature of most of the courses. Food is of good quality, freshly prepared, varied and balanced, with portion sizes reflective of the physical demands of growing young adults and the course nature. Students are responsible for their own medication, and are assessed for competency prior to staying at the college. This process is not followed up though to check whether they are managing their medication correctly. Emotional well-being is supported through students being offered formal support, or if they prefer, spending time with their trusted adults. For example, students may prefer to confide in residential support officers rather than the counsellor that has been facilitated.

How well young people are helped and protected: good

Students say that they can approach residential support officers with any worries, and have a variety of staff they can spend individual time with. The process of reporting safeguarding concerns within the college and referring to external agencies is clear and understood by all residential staff. Any new concerns are reflected on and used to develop safeguarding practice.

Staff are attuned to students' needs and know which individuals have support plans. From the freshers' fair, they identify students with additional needs. Working with parents, staff formulate plans in addition to strong communication with external professionals prior to students joining the college to identify any additional emotional well-being or behavioural needs. If students are at risk of self-injury, staff are aware of how to respond on the rare occasion that an incident should occur. The counsellor supports students to take responsibility for their actions and how to improve their relationships or low mood, resolving issues themselves.

External partners educate and support students regarding positive relationships, consent and sexual health. Government guidance regarding 'you're invited' has been reviewed and reflected upon to ensure that staff know how to respond. The likelihood of children being at risk of going missing is low. Improved links with the local police community support officer have further enhanced students' safety in the local community.

Students are fully aware of the behavioural expectations in the residential provision. Processes for managing inappropriate behaviour are clear and staged depending on the concern. Boundaries are consistent and issues such as drugs misuse are not tolerated – with students aware of consequences. Students have the opportunity to earn back trust and make good on mistakes – such as completing extra duties when they have missed these. Students may report bullying as a concern, and were seen to approach staff with friendship concerns, who in turn respond swiftly and support learners to manage their own relationships. The residential manager employs a solutions-focused approach to support students to resolve conflict. The atmosphere on campus is in the main friendly, with students happily hanging out with each other.

Students are supported to understand how to keep safe through informal sessions, empowering them to manage independently. The 'chill 'n' chat' is an open forum, where students can relax and staff can pick up any low-lying or emerging concerns. Through consultation with learners, staff have recognised the need to improve student knowledge in recognising radicalisation. The wider college policy on radicalisation has not been reviewed since 2019; this is a missed opportunity to ensure that the guidance is current and reflective of recent events.

Students are protected from avoidable risk through rigorous safer recruitment practice and regular checks of the firefighting equipment and systems. The residential accommodation is in the process of being upgraded. In the meantime, all students' rooms have been redecorated. However, the kitchen work surfaces are damaged and would not meet food safety standards.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Since the college was acquired by North Kent College in August 2020, there have been various changes to the senior leadership team. While this has led to some significant improvements, it has also caused instability.

The current senior leadership team is highly aspirational and ambitious for students' progress and outcomes. Staff say that they are well supported and have easy access to senior leaders. There is a culture of progression for staff, with many leaders having worked in the college in other roles. The senior leaders recognise and acknowledge the challenges the college currently faces, which range from building and renovation to development of courses and student experiences.

The residential provision currently does not have its own evaluation and development plan, resulting in lack of clarity over the quality of the environment or support provided. There has been considerable expenditure across the campus. There is still a significant amount of improvement work required to the fabric of the accommodation, with plans in place to improve this. Given the historical nature of the college prior to acquisition, this is a challenging piece of work, with many areas already developed.

The prospectus for residential students is informative and reflective of the student experience. The culture among the residential students embraces an acceptance that all are different. Students are encouraged to follow their educational passions uninhibited by traditional gender stereotypes. Students feel safe to explore their identity on campus in the accepting culture.

Students are recognised as individual. All staff know which students need extra support and they put in interventions and strategies to enable them to continue on their course. Electronic monitoring systems allow staff to track student progress and identify where there are gaps. Joint working ensures that students do not slip through the net educationally or in residential. The 'one college' approach of data being collected and reported for all of the North Kent College campuses means that it is not possible to review data relating to specific campuses. This militates against an understanding of what is happening on this campus.

What does the college need to do to improve?

Recommendations

- Update the 'Prevent' policy to reflect changes since the last review in 2019.
- Ensure that kitchen work surfaces in the student accommodation are maintained to a sufficiently high standard to adhere to safe food hygiene practice.

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: SC377848

Principal: Chris Lydon (acting)

Inspectors

Jennie Christopher, Social Care Inspector

Peter Jackson, Social Care Inspector

Sarah Olliver, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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