

Communication Specialist College Doncaster

Communication Specialist College Doncaster, Leger Way, Doncaster, South Yorkshire
DN2 6AY

Inspection of residential provision

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this further education college with residential accommodation

The college is run by a charitable trust, providing students who have complex needs with a specialist communication environment. The college has two residential lodges on site, Darley for male students and Greenaway for female students. Both lodges accommodate students aged 16 plus. At the time of the inspection, there were 16 students accommodated, two of whom were under 18. There were also 76 day students.

Inspection dates 11 to 13 December 2017

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 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.

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Date of last inspection: 22 March 2012

Key findings from this inspection

This college is outstanding because:

- The leadership team is inspirational and ambitious. The team works hard to promote the needs of students at a local and national level. The team's persistent and dedicated efforts ensure that students receive excellent standards of care.
- Staff team members across the college are equally motivated. They work as a cohesive team and fully support the leadership team in delivering the best support possible.
- College leaders are proactive and realistic in managing self-assessment, monitoring systems and making continuous improvements.
- The residential lodges provide students with comprehensive care packages that are fully integrated with their learning and studies in the college.
- Students' communication, welfare, social and health needs are thoroughly supported in a nurturing environment.
- Staff know the students very well and overcome any barriers to maximise their potential, achieve well and find gainful employment.
- Parents rate the college very highly for the positive impact it has on their children.
- Safeguarding practice is good. Staff promote the students' well-being effectively and help them feel safe and secure.

The college's areas for development are:

- When concerns are highlighted in the background checks of staff, college leaders should complete a risk assessment to formalise their decision-making about recruitment.
- Review the record-keeping system for the use of physical intervention so that records clearly inform the reader how staff have used an intervention.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of young people: outstanding

The residential provision is excellent and is an integral part of the college in providing students with outstanding experiences. Student support is very person centred and contributes towards students achieving realistic goals and maximising their potential. Staff are skilled and experienced to support all students, including those who have complex needs.

Students highly value their relationships with staff. Students are happy and are able to talk to staff about any concerns, knowing that they will be listened to and taken seriously. Staff provide students with an extremely caring, homely and friendly living environment. Students feel comfortable to be open about their wishes and feelings, their confidence flourishes, and they are far more independent in speaking up for themselves. There is a considerable student voice that can influence the running of the college and their day-to-day care. This is achieved in a variety of ways, including the student council, residents' meetings, and consultation about work placements and daily conversation with staff.

Students receive high levels of support with their diverse communication needs. This is informed through assessment and speech and language therapy. Students try out their developing communication skills in different social settings. These opportunities make a significant difference to students' social skills and self-esteem. One parent commented, 'It is an excellent college, he would not go to school before. He socialises, makes friends, and is far more independent and now thinks about his future.'

There is a thorough and comprehensive assessment and admissions process. Students quickly settle into their residential accommodation and make new friends. Students receive additional support during the admissions process, such as the provision of free counselling to help them transition into college. They continue to benefit from excellent access to specialist help from child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS), audiology, counselling and speech and language therapy.

Staff are skilled in implementing individual care strategies. There is a very consistent multi-agency approach across college, including health, education and social care. Students develop healthier lifestyles, they have a good diet, and learn about appropriate relationships and safe sexual health. Medication arrangements are effective and safe.

Work placements are planned resourcefully and imaginatively. Staff have links with a wide range of employers and can match students successfully. These arrangements are boosted by the provision of deaf awareness training for employers. The quality of support for students and employers helps students progress into paid apprenticeships and employment.

Students make exceptional progress, facilitated with varied and tailored learning timetables. Students access a range of vocational subjects aimed at improving their

employability, including motor vehicle engineering, horticulture and construction. Participation in the college's Enterprise Project develops students' skills further in a real life business enterprise.

Improvements in students' education achievements, employment, confidence, social skills and independence are sustained by their experiences of college life. Staff are able to evidence the huge difference that they make for students, including those who have complex needs.

How well young people are helped and protected: good

Students feel safe, and the college is innovative and forward thinking with the provision of pastoral support and promotion of student well-being. Students feel secure, improve in confidence, and develop strategies to be more resilient and manage their own behaviour.

Students and staff are supported by the local CAMHS. The college has made this more effective by providing CAMHS with their own base on the campus, making it an integral part of student support. Students receive bespoke care that promotes their well-being. Furthermore, the pilot crisis risk management strategy, fully inclusive of students' and parents' input, is having considerable impact on student safety. Students benefit from an on-site counsellor, separate to CAMHS, who promotes their self-esteem and understanding of relationships.

There is an effective in-house multi-agency behaviour management team. This team promotes competent and proactive staff practice and ensures that there is purposeful oversight of any concerns about student behaviour. This directly influences tailored care plans for students, helping them maximise their college experiences. The use of physical intervention is rare and a last resort to keep students safe. Records do not always make it clear how staff have applied an intervention, which limits the quality of monitoring.

Students do not go missing from the college. Staff are experienced in supervising students and know if any of them are out late, so that they can take appropriate action to make sure that students return safely. Planned tutorials based on national good practice and guidance support student learning with internet safety, and students develop a better sense of personal security in using social media.

Safeguarding leaders work in partnership with the local authority and police. Any student safety issues are reported appropriately and action is taken to keep students free from harm. Students benefit from the training that staff receive in relevant safeguarding areas, such as self-harm, recognising mental health issues in people with learning disabilities, and child sexual exploitation. Leaders build links with local and national organisations to promote positive practice in relation to areas such as lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender, hate crime and deaf awareness. Students made a T-shirt about hate crime and learned business skills in the style of the TV programme *The Apprentice*. These links and projects promote student safety, inclusion and well-being in college, locally and nationally.

Recruitment processes ensure that only staff suitable to work with vulnerable students

are employed. Senior leaders deliberate carefully about staff appointments. These arrangements would be more extensive if decision-making was recorded, particularly when any concerns are highlighted in the completion of background checks.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

Leaders are resourceful and accomplished in providing students with individualised experiences and opportunities. This supports students to maximise their potential, succeed in the transition to adulthood, and benefit from achieving employment.

There are regular internal reviews of student progress. Staff at all levels support students to make excellent progress in line with their education, health and care (EHC) plans. Comprehensive management oversight ensures that students receive care that is responsive to their individual needs, progress and any safeguarding concerns.

Leaders are ambitious, both in what the college can achieve and the impact that this has for the students. Leaders have high expectations and are successful in realising their ambition. They constantly strive to improve what the college has to offer. They have formed fruitful links with the Local Chamber of Commerce, providing students with innovative work experiences and greater opportunities of employment. There are further extensive links with the local community. For example, prospective employers are given free training in sign language to support students into work. Deaf awareness training events with local businesses have helped raise the profile of students, and one large corporate organisation is supporting students by organising mock work interviews.

The leadership team makes every effort to keep the college at the heart of the local and wider community to improve the inclusion and welfare of its students. The college is part of the local Autism Partnership Board and promotes awareness of autistic spectrum disorder, as well as helping students and their families get the most out of the EHC planning process. This has also led to students being able to enjoy more deaf and autism friendly films at the local cinema. On a wider scale, students benefit from participating in international work promoting British and International Sign Languages.

Staff attend regular networking events to keep abreast with best practice and be involved, locally and regionally, to provide students with remarkable care and experiences. This includes work with a national organisation to develop support for students with cochlear implants, using innovative strategies so that students improve their functional communication and social skills.

The college has fruitful links with other professionals, agencies and organisations. The quality of these relationships undoubtedly maximises students' life chances.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of young people. They watched how professional staff work with young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to

understand what the college knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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: SC008016

Principal/CEO: Mr Alan Robinson

Inspector

Simon Morley, social care inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2018