

Peter Symonds College

Peter Symonds College, Owens Road, Winchester, Hampshire SO22 6RX

Inspection of residential provision

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this further education college with residential accommodation

Peter Symonds College is a Sixth Form college providing courses for 16 to 19-year-old students and adults. Adult and higher education is on a separate site. Accommodation for 16 to 19-year-old students is available in two boarding houses located on the campus. There are currently 66 boarders.

Inspection dates 16 to 18 October 2018

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.

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Date of last inspection: 20 October 2015

Key findings from this inspection

This college is outstanding because:

- Senior leaders and managers are highly competent, experienced and confident in maintaining an inspirational culture in which boarders thrive.
- Boarders live in an inclusive and supportive community which enriches their experiences and positively influences their personal and academic development.
- Working collaboratively, all staff share the common purpose to support each individual boarder to achieve their full potential.
- The support given by staff applies to all aspects of boarders' lives. They recognise and respond effectively to boarders' individual needs. The well-being of boarders has a high priority. Exceptional support services help students manage difficulties and develop resilience.
- Safeguarding the boarders is at the heart of the staff's practice. Comprehensive training for the staff and effective systems for identifying and responding to concerns promote boarders' welfare. A sharp focus on educating all students to keep themselves safe is clearly evident.

The college's areas for development:

- Fully embed systems to ensure that the boarding staff receive regular individual reviews of their practice.

What does the college need to do to improve?

Recommendations

- Ensure that the system for boarding staff to receive regular, individual reviews of their practice is embedded.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of young people: outstanding

Boarders live in a supportive and inclusive community which enriches their experiences and positively influences their development. They feel valued and appreciate the opportunities to develop their independence and their confidence as they move forward to the next stage of their lives.

Professional and committed staff work collaboratively, focus on the individual needs of boarders and provide the appropriate levels of support for boarders to succeed and achieve to the best of their ability. Strong relationships between staff and boarders underpin practice. Boarders are comfortable in approaching staff and seeking help, advice and guidance, knowing that they will receive a response to help them move forward.

Boarders have access to excellent support for all their health needs. Staff employed in Student Services are extremely proactive in promoting the health and well-being of students. Health campaigns across the college include such topics as smoking, sexual health and relationships. The college nurse oversees the specific health needs of boarders and effective health plans are in place to guide staff in supporting boarders' individual medical needs. Staff have a continual focus on the emotional and mental health of boarders. They are alert to the signs of emotional distress, anxiety and stress, and are trained to provide appropriate support and promote the resilience of boarders.

The extensive enrichment programme provides students with a broad range of activities which promote their well-being and personal development. They learn new skills, make new friends and have opportunities to become involved in college life, the local community and charity work.

Boarders are extremely positive about their boarding experience. They commented on it being 'like a big family', helping to develop their independence, confidence and to take responsibility for themselves. A boarder said, 'You learn about yourself and about being around people.'

How well young people are helped and protected: outstanding

With a focus on treating every student as an individual and responding to their individual needs, support and guidance systems across the college are wide ranging and effective. The tutorial system is central to the pastoral care provided for all students, with boarding

staff adding an extra dimension to the support for boarders' health and well-being. Student Services provides information and help on all non-academic matters and is central to college life. Students benefit from having easy access to staff who respond promptly to their queries and concerns.

The well-being of students has a high priority in caring for boarders. In addition to the close monitoring of the well-being of boarders by boarding house staff, boarders have access to The Hub, which is a resource dedicated to promoting their emotional and mental health. The Hub provides a wide variety of activities, ranging from therapy dog sessions, relaxation sessions and advice on strategies to help students who feel emotionally overwhelmed. Counsellors are available for students who have more complex emotional needs.

Comprehensive and specific care plans and risk assessments are in place for boarders who have complex needs. These provide detailed guidance for boarding staff and other staff to meet boarders' individual needs. Multi-disciplinary working and excellent communication ensure a consistent approach.

An ethos of safeguarding students is embedded in all aspects of the college. Led by a skilled and experienced designated safeguarding lead, the team of safeguarding officers is proactive and responds effectively to all concerns raised. The team works collaboratively with the Local Children's Safeguarding Board, consulting with the designated officer to ensure that appropriate action is taken to protect students. Appropriate referrals are made to external safeguarding agencies when necessary. Safeguarding concerns are closely analysed to identify trends and to monitor the staff's practice. Managers ensure that the staff implement targeted protective strategies.

Safeguarding training for key support staff is wide-ranging and frequently updated so that they have the necessary knowledge and awareness of the current risks that boarders may face and are able to implement protective strategies. Educating boarders to keep themselves safe is a priority. All students benefit from information, guidance and advice from external specialists focusing on a wide range of safeguarding matters.

Within boarding there is a culture of mutual respect. One boarder commented, 'We are treated as adults.' Boarders are encouraged to discuss and resolve any issues themselves. Behaviour is excellent.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

Ambitious and aspirational leadership is reflected in a culture of high expectation in which all staff strive to support and motivate students to achieve to the best of their abilities. Leaders and managers are highly competent. Led by a new Principal, who has been in post since September 2018, staff share the common purpose of providing an excellent residential experience for students to enhance their learning outcomes and develop their independence.

Boarders benefit from support staff who are professional and committed to providing them with an appropriate level of assistance and guidance to succeed and develop new

skills. Boarding staff place the health and well-being of boarders at the centre of their practice.

All support staff complete a wide range of training to meet the diverse needs of boarders, with a sharp focus on safeguarding them and promoting their well-being. Through the appraisal system, regular boarding staff meetings and continuous informal support from the head of boarding, staff receive effective support to improve their practice and their support for boarders. The head of boarding has introduced individual supervision for boarding staff, but this is not yet embedded.

Leaders and managers seek continuously to develop the boarding experience. They undertake a detailed evaluation of the boarding provision to maintain the high quality of support provided for boarders and promote an ethos that motivates boarders to make an informed journey towards adulthood.

Collaborative working across the college results in the constructive sharing of information about boarders and appropriate, responsive support to meet their individual needs. Proactive partnership working with external agencies is particularly effective.

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: SC062851

Principal/CEO: Sara Russell

Inspectors

Jan Hunnam, social care inspector

Jennie Christopher, social care inspector

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