

RNIB College Loughborough

Inspection report for further education college

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Inspector	Martha Nethaway
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About this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcome for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and relevant National Minimum Standards for the establishment.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding:	this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality
Good:	this aspect of the provision is strong
Satisfactory:	this aspect of the provision is sound
Inadequate:	this aspect of the provision is not good enough

Service information

Brief description of the service

RNIB College Loughborough is a residential independent specialist college recruiting from across the UK. The college is located in purpose-built accommodation on the campus of Loughborough College, with the aim of enabling learners to have access to the full range of provision of a mainstream, general, further education college. The RNIB College recruits learners aged 16–63 funded either by the Learning and Skills Council or the Department for Work and Pensions. At the time of the inspection there were 67 learners in total. Of these there were 21 learners aged under 18 of whom 15 were residential and six day. The majority of learners have a visual impairment and most learners have multiple difficulties and disabilities, such as learning difficulties, physical mobility difficulties, autistic spectrum disorder, mental health issues or hearing loss.

Summary

This inspection was a key announced visit. The visit concentrated on the key National Minimum Standards (NMS) for Further Education (FE) College. The overall judgement in this report is based on the standards inspected within the relevant Every Child Matters outcome groups. Discussions were held with learners, staff and management.

The overall quality rating for this setting is good, with outstanding features in the Enjoy and Achieve, Positive Contribution, Economic Wellbeing and Organisation outcome areas. Staff show strong commitment and work hard to achieve the best outcomes for learners. Staff are able to capitalise and enable learners to integrate with people with different abilities as far as possible within the mainstream community. The accommodation is organised in a person-centred way so that each learner receives an individual package to care and support that best meets their needs.

There is one recommendation set as a result of this inspection visit.

The overall quality rating is good.

This is an overview of what the inspector found during the inspection.

Improvements since the last inspection

RNIB College Loughborough continues to demonstrate good commitment to ensuring the service meets National Minimum Standards.

At the last inspection there were no recommendations set.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

RNIB College Loughborough has in place a good range of policies, procedures and staff practice that promote learner's health which lead to good outcomes. Staff are effective in meeting the needs of learners in relation to their health. The college promotes mental and emotional health by providing a supportive tutorial and key worker process for all learners, with tutors providing first-line counselling. The college also give all learners access to a trained counsellor and mental health support worker who is independent of RNIB College Loughborough. Learners are able to access information about sexual health and relationship advice which are structured sessions.

Learners have access to accompanied visits to the hospital, doctors, dentist and walk in health centres. Staff consistently promote healthy lifestyle choices in daily routines, exercise and activities. Learners can have access to physiotherapists and occupational therapists. Learners also regularly access hydro-therapy sessions which are organised by the in-house physiotherapist.

Staff training sessions have been provided on self-harm for all relevant residential and teaching staff. The college has also increased training for staff for specific disabilities which include cerebral palsy and down syndrome and medical conditions such as diabetes and epilepsy awareness.

The college addresses learner's personal, social and health needs through the daytime and extended curriculum. The college's personal development programme seeks to highlight the issues facing learners today and signpost them to where they can seek further advice and support both now and in the future. For learners that have learning difficulties and those with complex disabilities they are allocated a 'Personal Social Care Worker' (PSCW) to support them in accessing these activities. The college is fully accessible to learners with wheelchairs.

The college has effective arrangements in place for the management of first-aid and this ensures that learners receive appropriate treatment. The staff in the boarding houses are able to provide simple first aid. All accidents, injuries and illnesses are fully recorded and form part of the learner's records. Staff ensure that appropriate consents are in place for medical treatment.

The college has in place arrangements for administering medications. The staff team maintain accurate records and a clear audit trail of medications at the college. The staff are able to manage very effectively, specific medical conditions including, epilepsy and diabetes because staff have received specific training so there is a clear understanding of the medical aspects and what actions are required to support the learners.

The college employs a professional catering team who prepare and cook the college meals for learners. Healthy eating options are encouraged and there is always a vegetarian option. For example, menus with chips are only available twice per week and the college provide free fruit for learners at morning break. Mealtimes are experienced as sociable occasions. Staff also provide opportunities for learners to prepare their meals in the residences. There are established systems in place to support those learners who wish to progress to self-catering in the residential accommodation.

Learners have access to gardening on the curriculum and spoke positively about the opportunities that are provided related to horticulture activities.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Learner's welfare continues to be promoted and protected because positive steps are taken by staff. Staff receive good quality training in relation to the promotion of safeguarding practices. They know and understand their role in relation to the agenda for the protection and welfare of learners. There is a designated person who takes full responsibility for the staff safeguarding training programme. They have received appropriate levels of training for this role. In addition, all staff are trained in the procedures for the protection of vulnerable adults.

RNIB College Loughborough has good systems in place to ensure that the college deals with bullying effectively. Learners commented that, 'bullying behaviours are not tolerated'. Some learners commented 'that they are free from bullying for the first time'. Staff remain vigilant and this helps learners to remain protected. RNIB College Loughborough follows a reasonable and appropriate policy on behaviour. The standard of learner's behaviour is good and learners identify that staff are clear with their expectations. Staff reward positive behaviours through verbal feedback and praise. As part of the ASDAN programme learners are provided with opportunities to develop their self awareness and to learn their rights and responsibilities. Regular workshops related to assertiveness, bullying and relationships are organised by the college. This supports learners to develop their sense of security.

The college also has effective health and safety procedures in place and learners commented that, 'they feel safe'. The college includes learner representatives on the health and safety committee to put forward learner concerns. Staff take seriously the safety and security of the learners. There are excellent systems in place and the layout of the accommodation and good security features promotes safety for learners. Staff know the whereabouts of all learners at all times. Good levels of communication are maintained between learners and staff when they are using resources in the community. Staff provide mobility training and this includes safe travel through the college curriculum.

Learners have been grouped in flats according to their ability to access independent activities in an effort to promote more challenging activities and risk taking. Staff use risk management effectively and complete documented risk assessments which are periodically reviewed. Learners are protected from the risk of fire. All learners and staff are given fire safety instruction and fire drills are carried out on a regular basis.

The college has an effective and robust procedure for dealing with complaints and concerns. All complaints are logged on a database and regularly analysed for any bias in gender, ethnicity and disability. Learners are well informed about how to access and log a complaint. Records show a responsible, sensitive and professional approach at all stages in the college's response to complaints. In addition, learners are encouraged to write their 'Golden Rules' that promote respect and core values.

Staff manage learners' privacy and this conveys respect for them. All staff complete a confidentiality statement upon appointment and this is included in staff training on 'Ethos and Values'. Staff respect learners' privacy and staff are skilled at providing support that is responsive to their needs. All learners are provided with a single room with full en-suite facilities which means that personal dignity can be promoted at all times.

Staff recruitment procedures ensure all the necessary checks take place to ensure the suitability of persons caring for learners prior to employment. Senior staff have attended advanced training with corporate RNIB which is mandatory for all staff involved in recruitment. The college records of the recruitment and selection process undertaken are generally of a good standard. However, one minor shortfall exists and this primarily relates to the college not making telephone checks to verify all references obtained. RNIB College Loughborough intends to rectify this shortfall immediately and complete a thorough self-audit.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

RNIB College Loughborough cultivates learner's personal development and this includes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The college operates a wholly inclusive environment so that learners develop the skills and personal qualities needed to progress in life. The college's strong multi-disciplinary approach to learners ensures they receive support when they need to access learning and activities including work placements. The 'Learners Voice' is given a high priority through peer review conferences, focus groups, survey and representation on all key college committees. This clearly demonstrates staff ability to engage learners at all levels and to incorporate their views. This helps to evaluate the strengths and areas for further improvement.

The college actively promotes an inclusive further education programme by enabling other institutions to include blind and partially sighted people in their education and training and by meeting directly itself those needs that are not being adequately provided elsewhere. Learners are able to attend places of worship. Also learners have access to a non-denominational chaplain who has a positive relationship with them all by attending college for discussion groups every fortnight.

Learners receive excellent individual support. Learners are on individualised programmes negotiated with them at pre-assessment visits and reviewed during the first weeks of their programme. RNIB College Loughborough places a strong emphasis on the personal tutors and key workers who clearly help learners achieve their individual learning aims. Learners attend their review meetings which are also attended by social workers, connexions advisers and parents, carers when and where appropriate.

Learners are confident and provided with many opportunities to fulfil their potential. Learners clearly identified a number of staff who they could approach if they needed help or support. This includes staff from both the residential and teaching establishment. A link book is available between the residential and educational staff at the beginning and end of the day.

Learners have access to a comprehensive range of programmes for recreational activities both on campus and out in the community. The activities promote learner's independent living skills, social interaction and inclusion in the community. The role of the extended curriculum co-ordinator has been enhanced to ensure a greater emphasis on developing community links. As a result, there is a significant increase in learners being more involved with the community.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

RNIB College Loughborough strongly promotes and supports a student committee that organises events and activities. Learners are encouraged to take part in focus groups and conferences to help bring about whole school change. Learners have access to regular meetings including flat meetings and resident meetings. Learners take the lead and staff are identified as providing good assistance and are kind, friendly, trustworthy, sociable and respectful.

Learners can contact their parents by their own telephone in their room, or by personal mobile and by email. Staff encourage learners to maintain appropriate contact with parents, carers and friends.

The college has effective systems and procedures in place for the admission of prospective learners. All learners are invited to a residential assessment where a baseline assessment is

completed by a multi-disciplinary team. This then helps to inform the college's decision to offer a placement at the college.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is outstanding.

RNIB College Loughborough provides outstanding accommodation that meets the needs of learners with visual impairment. All learners have an individual room, which they are able to personalise as their own living space by using their own cultural choice. Learners are encouraged to look after their personal possessions. The accommodation is maintained to a high standard and there are cleaning staff employed to ensure that standards of cleanliness, presentation and tidiness are very well maintained. The college regularly arranges holiday trips and ensures that learners accommodation fully meets their needs. Staff complete all the necessary outward bound risk assessments.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

RNIB College Loughborough is a well managed college with effective management structures in place. The managers provides strong strategic leadership in order to provide a culture of collaboration across the staff teams. The Principal provides inspiring leadership and has clear ambitions for the direction of the college.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. RNIB College Loughborough has in place a 'Equality and Diversity Action Plan' which is put into practice. The college aims to positively promote the quality of life for all learners by the college's actions, the images that are used and challenging stereotypes and discriminatory behaviour. The college maintains an excellent strategic partnership with Loughborough College which enhances learner's opportunities. RNIB College Loughborough also has in place a strong network of local employers which supports progression to paid and voluntary work for learners.

The college has an up to date 'Statement of Purpose' that fully discusses what support and help can be expected from the college. The information is comprehensive and effectively communicated. Staff are aware of the key principles and philosophy of RNIB College Loughborough and share this clear vision of the college. RNIB College Loughborough has a comprehensive range of policies and procedures for the effective running and management of the college.

The college has a outstanding commitment to ensure that the residential team have the suitable skills and knowledge available through the implementation of a bespoke training programme. To support this care practice there are good structures in place which helps senior staff to lead the frontline care support workers.

The college has a well developed and comprehensive quality assurance programme. The college knows where the key strengths and weaknesses are in terms of service delivery. There is clear evidence of the college monitoring records in relation to evaluating any trends or patterns that emerge.

What must be done to secure future improvement?

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions, which must be taken so that the registered person meets the Care Standards Act 2000, and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider must comply with the given timescales.

Standard	Action	Due date
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Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- review all the elements for the college system for recruiting staff as outlined in Standard 34.2. (NMS 34.2).