

Bishop Burton College

York Road, Bishop Burton, Beverley HU17 8QG

Inspection of residential provision

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this further education college with residential accommodation

Bishop Burton College is a specialist 750-acre land-based college. There is a main residential campus in the village of Bishop Burton that currently supports 150 under-18 residential students. In Lincolnshire, there is another campus, Riseholme, that supports 24 under-18 residential students. Each campus has a dedicated team of residential wardens supporting students across the college.

The college offers a range of learning across various qualifications in key sectors of land-based work, including agriculture, animal care, environmental studies, horticulture and equine studies. The college also has specialisms in sport and has established partnerships with well-known regional sports teams.

Inspection dates: 21 to 23 October 2025

Overall experiences and progress of young people, taking into 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: 7 February 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of young people: outstanding

Students feel appreciated, respected and fully invested in college life. Wardens and residential leaders play a vital role in sustaining students' engagement with their studies. This is done with patience and persistence over a period of time. The relationship-based culture is so embedded in college life that it truly reflects a vibrant learning community where the spirit of youth is harnessed.

A senior college leader said: 'We are a land-based college. Our starting point is residence; everything grows from there.' This sentiment is inherent in all staff. Every student is known to staff beyond the student's name. This has created a true sense of community and belonging, not only for students, but for the staff that work there, regardless of their role.

Leaders and managers are astutely aware of the potentially daunting prospect of students living away from home and from their loved ones. Therefore, excellent efforts are made in the students' induction to ensure that students have opportunities to forge relationships at this early and vulnerable point. Innovative examples include a local theatre group being used to inject creativity and fun, so students have a unique and memorable bonding experience.

Staff in student services expertly and naturally conduct their vital role in college. This has ensured that there is no stigma associated with students accessing support, whatever this may be. Students have been supported to process loss and to manage and overcome significant personal challenges. Indeed, many students highlighted that, during acute crises, well-being services provided crucial support. Therefore, in times of challenge, students continue to feel connected with their studies and life in college.

Students feel comfortable talking about physical and mental health concerns with staff, regardless of the staff's role in college. Again, meaningful relationships are at the heart of this. Therefore, staff can support students effectively and, if necessary, accompany them to health appointments or to help resolve issues as and when they arise.

Enrichment opportunities are available for students throughout the week, including weekends. The sports development team in college are proactive in seeking out students to take part in several team sports. Wardens are skilled at encouraging student participation. Additionally, overseas expeditions are subsidised for qualifying students, ensuring that there are equal opportunities to participate. Cumulatively, these experiences give students a richer experience of college life.

Students' parents and loved ones establish good lines of communication with college. Parents said that the wardens give them reassurance as and when required.

One parent said: 'They are like an extended family.' Another commented, 'It has given her a new lease of life,' when talking about their loved one.

Students are proud of their college and are keen to share their experiences. One student said: 'Wardens have helped me with my confidence and independence, I love it here.' Another student poignantly said: 'Wardens are like second parents to me.' Notably, a student humorously but lovingly added: 'Wardens don't change, my brother said they are the same from eight years ago!'

How well young people are helped and protected: outstanding

Students' induction is seen as a critical component in supporting students to adapt to life at college. Of significance, there is a heightened awareness for students with additional needs, students who may have troubled lives and for international students. Safeguarding leads and student services play a crucial role in this vulnerable point of the students' journey. In doing so, students' needs and vulnerabilities are immediately understood and proportionately acted on.

In respect of overseeing the welfare of students, both college sites work as one unified team. Designated safeguarding leads (DSLs) champion the protection of the college's students and ensure that all staff understand their duty of care. Structures, such as weekly DSL meetings, are embedded in practice and promote strong oversight of safeguarding processes. Importantly, members of the DSL team work with and alongside regional safeguarding agencies. This vital networking not only ensures that students gain access to services but also keeps staff abreast of the ever-shifting and complex nature of safeguarding.

The college's electronic recording systems seamlessly interact, so that records demonstrate clear lines of accountability. This is through staff being skilled at using the system. Written records are succinct but provide context and clear decision-making.

The college makes excellent use of technology to assist in staff's ability to safeguard its students. This is through the innovative use of virtual reality and the college's investment in firewalls and web-filtering software. Furthermore, staff are adept at applying these systems in practice, meaning that worries can be countered rapidly and effectively through an educative approach.

Wardens are equipped with knowledge and awareness to better safeguard students. In particular, wardens cited the innovative 15-minute bite-sized sessions as being an excellent means of highlighting and retaining topical safeguarding issues that are relevant to the students. Indeed, these sessions are aplenty and the practice in this area is worthy of wider dissemination.

The college is immersed in its respective local communities. As part of this, there is effective joined-up working with the police and other specialist services who are regular visitors to the college. These relationships and interventions have a tangible

influence on the support that students have access to. Examples include the proactive and joined-up efforts to deter underage drinking, educating students on road safety and on a plethora of topical teenage health issues. Cumulatively, this has created an open community-based environment that has several sources of support for students to be educated and safeguarded.

College security staff are directly employed by the college. Therefore, these staff are bound by the same safer recruitment processes and college values as other staff. Notably, the role of security staff goes way beyond a visible, physical and protective layer of college security. These staff also have a relationship-based approach to their role. They also establish meaningful relationships with students. Again, this adds to the culture that is embedded in college, a culture that is focused on the welfare and well-being of its students.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The scale of operation concerning Bishop Burton and Riseholme is significant. However, all employees, regardless of role, work collaboratively over both sites to ensure that the whole college runs smoothly. Again, the manner in which this is done has created a sense of community. Underpinning this are the college's five values that are tangible and embedded in the culture.

The student living-in booklet is an essential document that covers important aspects associated with life in residence. This is a reassuring reference point for students and their loved ones. Ultimately, the content reflects the students' reality. This is crucial to building trust through reflecting an accurate insight into what students and their loved ones can expect from life in residence.

Leaders use data systems effectively to better understand student experiences. Importantly, the data distinguishes under-18 students who are residents. Furthermore, and impressively, from the data, various staff from differing roles are able to evaluate how many residential students access their respective area of practice. This shows that the college understands the need to track residential students and, where necessary, intervene.

The individuals who make up the board of governors are committed and invested and fully understand their role and influence. As they are to college staff, governors are visible to the students as they spend time at residence to form an independent view on what life in residence is like for the students.

Leaders make extensive efforts to ensure that the college continues to be an open and transparent environment. External auditors are commissioned to assist leaders to continue in their aspiration to evolve. The findings from the audit are heeded and used to continue in the college's pursuit of excellence for the ultimate benefit of the students.

Staff surveys are meaningful and gauge their views through relevant questions that are focused on staff well-being and staff productivity. Furthermore, wardens say that their managers are supportive and readily available to them. Indeed, wardens say that they feel valued and play a crucial role in college. Notably, warden retention is high, with several wardens being employed by the college over many years.

Safer recruitment checks are consistently applied across the college. In respect of residence, carrying out periodic Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks would strengthen the existing processes that the college has in place.

What does the college need to do to improve?

Point for improvement

- College leaders should consider periodically reviewing DBS checks for staff in residence, as part of maintaining the college's central register of staff and others with potential access to resident students who are under 18. ('Further education residential accommodation: national minimum standards', page 14, paragraph 14.1 and 14.2)

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: SC055268

Principal/CEO: Danny Metters

Inspectors

Steve Guirey, Social Care Inspector
Gina Lightfoot, Social Care Inspector
Ladean Wilson, Social Care Inspector

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