

Penn Hall School

Inspection report for residential special school

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Inspector	Carole Moore
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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

Penn Hall School is a Wolverhampton Local Authority Community Special School for pupils aged three to 18 whose special educational needs fall predominantly in the category of physical disability. Some pupils will have an associated learning difficulty related to their physical disability. The school can accommodate 80 pupils. The residential hostel can accommodate up to six pupils for overnight stays. A flexible approach is maintained so that children can stay from one to four nights a week with a maximum stay of 16 planned nights per year. On occasions the hostel can take children on an emergency basis due to family circumstances. The unit consists of a number of bathrooms and dormitory areas together with a television room, games room, life skills room and dining area. The aim of the residential hostel is to encourage independence and long term emotional maturity.

Summary

This was an announced inspection looking at the key Residential Special School National Minimum Standards (NMS) under the Every Child Matters outcome groups. All outcome areas were inspected and the only area not looked at in any detail was the recruitment procedures under the outcome Staying Safe. This was due to the fact that there has been no new member of staff in the residential unit since the last inspection and this area was well met at that time. At this inspection, Being Healthy, Staying Safe, Enjoying and Achieving, Making a Positive Contribution and Organisation were judged as outstanding and Economic Wellbeing was judged as good. Two recommendations were raised in relation to staying safe and organisation. This resource is unique in that it provides a very flexible approach to residential provision and parents and children make their own choices when it comes to deciding if they want to stay over at the hostel. Decisions are also made on which children share the week together and these decisions are very much taken in consultation with the children. This service provision is viewed by the children as 'sleepovers'. Children enjoy being at Penn Hall school hostel and benefit from professional, effective and imaginative management. This coupled with a staff team who are skilled, knowledgeable and enthusiastic provides all children with stimulating and purposeful care.

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

The school prospectus has been reviewed along with corresponding literature and now displays the name and address of Ofsted. Visits to the residential setting by the representative of the governing body is now recorded with a written report being completed. Action is currently being undertaken to ensure that those care staff who do not hold the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Level 3 in caring for children and young people can demonstrate that their qualifications match the competencies required.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children's individual health and intimate care needs are clearly identified and assessed as part of the school's admission process. Thorough and excellent health plans detail individual needs including support for emotional needs. Health needs which may impact on future outcomes

for the child are identified at the earliest opportunity and the nursing staff, in partnership with parents, actively seek out the services needed to address these. For example, involvement of specialist workers such as Speech and Language Therapists and Physiotherapists. This means children receive dynamic care that actively promotes their wellbeing and health. Health issues that relate to ethnicity, race, sexuality, faith or belief are fully assessed in respect of each child and these are explicitly identified in the care plan with any actions that may be needed to address them. Robust risk assessments are completed for manual handling and guidance is in place for staff to help ensure that this is done in a safe way. Medical consent is sought from parents and a signed form is retained on file ensuring that children can receive preventative and emergency medical treatment without delay. As a result, children receive care that actively protects their welfare. Children learn about the benefits of healthy living. They sit together at tables to enjoy a variety of healthy and nutritious meals. Menu planning is adventurous, integrates culturally appropriate food and encourages children to try new dishes. Whole school initiatives around healthy eating and looking after the environment take place regularly and the school has achieved the Healthy Schools Award. The benefits of children's participation in positive recreational experiences overwhelmingly contributes to their physical, social and emotional wellbeing. There are robust policies and procedures in place for the safe storage and administration of medication and the nursing staff take full responsibility for ensuring safe practice. Children's health and welfare is safeguarded because staff are made aware of the appropriate procedures to follow. Children's wellbeing is further promoted as staff receive training in the safe handling and administration of medication, and all staff are trained in basic first aid. Medication is transferred to the residential unit on a Monday morning by the nursing staff and any changes to the medication are explained to the staff on duty. The medication is then transferred back to the nurses at the end of the week and all medication further checked. Medication records are seen as key to the effective management of healthcare matters, staff are aware of the importance and necessity of them always being up to date and fully comprehensive.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Overall, the school has an excellent focus on safeguarding and protection issues with clear guidance that is communicated effectively to promote the wellbeing of children. Adults and children follow comprehensive guidelines for privacy that keeps everyone safe. The school has a committed management team that consistently promotes an environment where safety and children's welfare is paramount. There is an effective system in place to record any concerns made known by children. The arrangements for protecting children who may be at risk from running off or away are well established, although, there has never been the need for them to be implemented. Children reside in a stable and safe environment where their welfare is clearly paramount. Staff have a deep understanding of the needs of the children and how to safeguard them. All staff have read and understood the school's policies in relation to safeguarding children, and the policies relating to the use of physical interventions but there is no recorded evidence to show that this has taken place. The staff team receive regular child protection training as well as behaviour management training which supports their day-to-day practice. However, the head of care does need to update her own training in behaviour management. Children's safety is further promoted because staff are fully aware of the correct procedures to report any allegations or child protection issues. Children are protected from bullying by others. The provision is proactive in creating a culture within the school that does not tolerate bullying and provides support to vulnerable children. Children are assisted to develop appropriate

behaviour through the encouragement of acceptable behaviour and constructive staff responses to inappropriate behaviour. There is flexibility in the staffing ratios to support children, with all staff possessing an in-depth understanding of the communication difficulties of the children and how they exhibit dissatisfaction. There is very evident warmth in the relationship between the staff and the children. This was echoed by a parent who commented that 'the all round care that Penn Hall gives our child has been wonderful'. Positive steps are taken to keep children, staff and visitors safe from fire and other hazards in the school. For example, regular drills are undertaken and children are given the opportunity to participate. In addition, risk assessments on the environment are completed and updated on a regular basis. Staff within the school are all involved in these routines to ensure that health and safety is promoted by everyone. Children clearly enjoy playing in a child-orientated, accessible and completely stimulating environment that is welcoming and safe. Proactive monitoring of visitors to the school takes place, so as to prevent children being exposed to unsuitable adults. This excellent practice truly safeguards their welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children are supported by a professional and well-informed team who ensure the school maintains a flexible approach to providing personal care. Staff are knowledgeable about the individual needs of the children with equipment and adaptations in place to support safe practice. All support to maintain hygiene needs and activities of daily living are implemented in a professional and sensitive manner taking into consideration the wishes and needs of the child. A parent commented that 'my daughter loves staying in the hostel and I am confident that she is well cared for'. Staffing ratios are excellent. These high levels of support mean that children are safe, well cared for and well educated, yet still able to work towards functioning independently. Children receive a high and excellent degree of support. The school values, promotes and encourages all of their children to make the best of their educational opportunities. Children explore their potential and develop their personal interests because staff work in a very encouraging and supportive manner. Consequently, the care, learning opportunities and activities are excellent. Children receive individualised assistance, with the appropriate assessments and plans in place. Considerable effort is put into combining social, educational, care and health needs into a package which, will not only meet identified needs but promote development. This includes identifying any religious and cultural needs a child may have. Children freely initiate interaction and seek help from various staff members on duty. Children's wellbeing is positively promoted to ensure their continual care needs are met. Thus, children benefit from staying in the residential hostel because staff are focused on their success, needs and achievements. Children's welfare and safety is well supported because care plans and risk assessments are in place and include, in detail, children's social, sexual and health education. Children's social skills are extremely well promoted as they are encouraged to engage in a variety of activities within school and their local community. For example, children engage in swimming, visits to the cinema, the local horse riding stables and many other activities. Staff share their own interests and enthusiasms with the children and encourage them to try out new activities and interests. Children's comments and conversation clearly shows that they enjoy these activities and the time they spend in the hostel.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children are respected as individuals. Staff build a clear picture of their likes and dislikes such as what they enjoy eating and playing with. On recognition of children's preferences, they work actively to encourage them to try new activities and experiences. This helps staff to individualise the environment to suit the children's needs and thus broaden their horizons. The school successfully promotes inclusion as they challenge and promote attitudinal change because they have a belief that individuals can co-exist regardless of abilities and disabilities within the wider community. These values underpin staff's professional development and threads through all the school's policies and procedures. Children are extremely well consulted about life in the hostel. Their views and preferences are sought, including menu content, choice of bedrooms and activities. The school has an independent advocate who has experiences with disabilities. This enables the children to truly flourish as the advocate is able to offer a wide and varying degree of support, empathy and understanding. This increases children's welfare by ensuring exceptional safeguards are in place. Parents feel listened to and are consulted after every short stay their child has at the hostel. There is a very evident warmth in the relationship between the staff and the children and the staff team, who have been working at Penn Hall for many years, and have built up a strong bond with the children. Staff are very comfortable with their role of setting clearly understood boundaries while maintaining a high quality relationship between themselves and the children. Each child has clear records when they come into the residential hostel that have been drawn up between the school and the hostel. This clearly details how Children's needs are to be met during their overnight stays. Children are only in the hostel for a maximum four night stay so contact is not a major issue. However, parents or carers are encouraged to visit should they choose to do so and children are able to telephone home as and when they wish.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Children truly benefit from staying in the hostel as it promotes the encouragement of independence and long term emotional maturity. Staff spend a large majority of their time being with the children, supporting their care and development. Resources and space are used effectively to maximise children's independence and to provide them with a secure environment in which they build and develop trust. The school successfully enables a proactive culture of acceptance where all children are valued equally, treated with respect and given equal opportunities within the environment. Children are encouraged to develop life skills that prepare them for adulthood and independence. There are life skills and Leavers Programmes that include links with Colleges of Further Education which help children prepare for life after school. This programme includes regular visits from Connexions Service staff and local authority teams who work closely with the children and their families to ensure that children are well supported at an important stage in their lives. The residential hostel has a life skills centre dedicated to supporting children to make informed choices about their lives and children begin to feel empowered, motivated and more confident. The room itself is exciting with a range of special needs technologies and is attractive as well as functional. The use of environmental control systems provides access for all children through controllers or communication aids. Structured sessions help children practise the essential skills that will enable them to prepare for independence and adulthood. Children stay in a residential setting that is well decorated and maintained to a high standard. The head recognises the limitations of the building. However, with staff he has innovatively enabled an environment that blends itself well to proficiently meet children's needs. Children's enjoyment of sleepovers is high because it is relevant to their needs and interests. The evening curriculum is exciting as children take part in really valuable

activities both on and off site. They learn how to relate socially to others around them and how to cooperate with their peers and staff. Above all they thoroughly enjoy their 'sleepovers'.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

Children, parents, staff and placing authorities have access to a clear statement of the school's care principles and practice for life in residence. There is excellent management of the school and of the place of residence within it. Senior management teams clearly work well together and share a positive practical vision for the children at Penn hall school. Quotes from children were: 'able to see my friends outside of school, going out and doing things I don't normally get to do'. Children are looked after by staff who understand their needs and are able to meet them consistently. Staff are experienced, skilled and confident. Staffing levels are good and the Senior Management Team has deployed staff effectively to ensure that children have the adults they need to care for them and the adults have the time to fulfil the requirements of their increasingly professional role. Most of the staff team have a variety of qualifications that are consistent with the competencies required by the NVQ Level 3. Relationships between children and staff are good. Children and staff enjoy the stability of an efficiently run school. Systems for monitoring the operation of the residential unit are excellent, and the school has an atmosphere of purposeful and imaginative direction. Children are successfully supported by a staff team who are given support from their managers and supervisors. Staff are provided with formal supervision and meetings on a regular basis to ensure they are able to discuss the work they do with children. Meticulous team work is being effectively promoted by managers as a way of ensuring the school provides consistent care and support to the children. The Head of Care and Head Teacher have both established a pattern of management monitoring records, through which they analyse the performance of the residential staff in meeting their requirements. Penn Hall has delegated the responsibility for its half termly review of welfare to a member of the governing body. Written reports of these visits are now being completed and used as part of the quality assurance of the overall school. The visits provide excellent additional safeguarding mechanisms for the children by looking at staff and management practices. Children are exceptionally well supervised because of the effective leadership and management of the setting.

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):

- ensure that staff have signed a copy of the school's policy on measures of control, discipline and physical intervention, and evidence of this is retained on their personnel file.NMS 10.19

- ensure subject to the needs of individual staff there are programmes of training available which address the issues detailed in Appendix 2. NMS 29.4.

Annex

Annex A

National Minimum Standards for residential special school

Being healthy

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- children live in a healthy environment and the health and intimate care needs of each child are identified and promoted (NMS 14)
- children are provided with healthy, nutritious meals that meet their dietary needs (NMS 15)

Ofsted considers 14 the key standard to be inspected.

Staying safe

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- children's privacy is respected and information about them is confidentially handled (NMS 3)
- children's complaints are addressed without delay and children are kept informed of progress in their consideration (NMS 4)
- the welfare of children is promoted, children are protected from abuse, and an appropriate response is made to any allegation or suspicion of abuse (NMS 5)
- children are protected from bullying (NMS 6)
- all significant events relating to the protection of children in the school are notified to the appropriate authorities by the head of the school or designated person (NMS 7)
- children who are absent without authority are protected in accordance with written guidance and responded to positively on return (NMS 8)
- children are assisted to develop appropriate behaviour through the encouragement of acceptable behaviour and constructive staff responses to inappropriate behaviour (NMS 10)
- children live in schools that provide physical safety and security (NMS 26)
- there is careful selection and vetting of all staff and volunteers, and monitoring of visitors to the school to prevent children being exposed to potential abusers (NMS 27)

Ofsted considers 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 26 and 27 the key standards to be inspected.

Enjoying and achieving

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- the school's residential provision actively supports children's educational progress at the school (NMS 12)
- children have ample opportunity to engage in purposeful and enjoyable activities within the school and in the local community (NMS 13)
- children receive individual support when they need it (NMS 22)

Ofsted considers 12 and 22 the key standards to be inspected.

Making a positive contribution

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- children are encouraged and supported to make decisions about their lives and to influence the way the school is run; no child should be assumed to be unable to communicate their views (NMS 2)
- children have sound relationships with staff based on honesty and mutual respect (NMS 9)
- children experience planned and sensitively handled admission and leaving processes (NMS 11)

- children have their needs assessed and written plans outline how these needs will be met while at school (NMS 17)
- in accordance with their wishes children are able and encouraged to maintain contact with their parents and families while at school (NMS 20)

Ofsted considers 2, 17 and 20 the key standards to be inspected.

Achieving economic well-being

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- children can wear their own clothing outside school time, can secure personal requisites and stationery while at school, and are helped to look after their own money (NMS 16)
- children about to leave care are prepared for the transition into independent living (NMS 21)
- children live in well designed and pleasant premises, which provide sufficient space and facilities to meet their needs
- children live in accommodation which is appropriately decorated, furnished and maintained to a high standard, providing adequate facilities for their use (NMS 24)
- children are able to carry out their personal care in privacy and with dignity (NMS 25)

Ofsted considers the key standard to be inspected.

Organisation

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- children, parents, staff and placing authorities have access to a clear statement of the school's care principles and practice for boarding pupils (NMS 1)
- children's needs, development and progress are recorded to reflect their individuality and their group interactions (NMS 18)
- there are adequate records of the staff and child groups of the school (NMS 19)
- children are looked after by staff who understand their needs and are able to meet them consistently (NMS 28)
- children are looked after by staff who are trained to meet their needs (NMS 29)
- children are looked after by staff who are themselves supported and guided in safeguarding and promoting the children's welfare (NMS 30)
- children receive the care and services they need from competent staff (NMS 31)
- children and staff enjoy the stability of efficiently run schools (NMS 32)
- the governing body, trustees, local authority, proprietor or other responsible body monitors the welfare of the children in the school (NMS 33)

Ofsted considers 1, 28, 31 and 32 the key standards to be inspected.