

Exeter Royal Academy for Deaf Education

Inspection report for Residential Special School

Unique reference number	SC022216
Inspection date	19/11/2010
Inspector	David Kidner
Type of inspection	Key

Setting address	Exeter Royal Academy for Deaf Education, 50 Topsham Road, EXETER, EX2 4NF
Telephone number	01392 267 023
Email	
Registered person	Exeter Royal Academy for Deaf Education
Head/ Principal	Jonathan Farnhill
Nominated person	Jonathan Farnhill
Date of last inspection	04/11/2009

© Crown copyright 2010

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

You can obtain copies of The Children Act 2004, Every Child Matters and The National Minimum Standards for Children's Services from: The Stationery Office (TSO) PO Box 29, St Crispins, Duke Street, Norwich, NR3 1GN. Tel: 0870 600 5522. Online ordering: www.tso.co.uk/bookshop

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 outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and the relevant National Minimum Standards for the service.

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

Exeter Royal Academy for Deaf Education is a non-maintained residential special school. The age range of young people attending the academy is four to 24 years. The academy is divided into two areas, college and school.

The college area provides education and residential accommodation for older students who board during term time. The school area provides education and residential accommodation for younger students who board weekly. A small number of young people attend the academy as day students.

All areas are located on one site. Young people all have single bedrooms. There are baths, showers and toilet facilities in all residential areas. Older students have the use of kitchenettes. There are communal recreational areas.

The academy is located on a large site and has provision for outdoor activities. The academy has plans to relocate in the future.

Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

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

This was an announced full inspection and all key national minimum standards were assessed.

The principal confirmed that there have been continued delays in the ability to further proceed with the planned re-provision of the academy. However, the academy ensures that all interested stakeholders are kept informed of progress.

The academy continues to provide a good service. Students are encouraged and fully supported to express their needs, wishes and opinions regardless of their communication need. The service is fully committed in ensuring that all staff who work at the academy receive training in British Sign Language (BSL) and exceeds the requirement that 80 per cent of care staff have completed National Vocation Qualification (NVQ) at level 3 or above, or are working towards the qualification.

Students have easy access to a variety of health care professionals, including speech and language therapy, and the academy ensures that comprehensive care plans are developed and that students are supported to develop their independence. The academy strives to ensure that all students have access to a variety of social and leisure opportunities both inside and outside of the academy. Younger children stated that they have lots of activities and that they are fun.

The academy ensures that there is a continued programme of maintenance, repair and refurbishment in operation and promotes health and safety and fire safety.

A number of the academy's policies and procedures are due to be reviewed. As a result of this inspection seven recommendations have been made. These include matters relating to medical consents, medicines, room searches, refurbishment and redecoration and the monitoring of complaints.

Improvements since the last inspection

A recommendation was made at the last inspection to ensure that all food that is stored in the fridges and freezers in residential accommodation is appropriately wrapped and labelled, the fridges and freezers are regularly cleaned and review the quality of food that is provided for further education students when preparing their own meals. This recommendation has been met.

Since the last inspection the academy now ensures that there is a more robust procedure in place in relation to the management of students finances. The academy has also ensured that all written entries on student files and other records are signed and dated and the name of the signatory is clearly identified. These matters were recommendations at the previous inspection and therefore, these have been met.

A recommendation to ensure medication refusal and antibiotic use are fully recorded has not yet been met.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The academy actively promotes the health care needs of students. Some students are registered with the academy's General Practitioner and where this is the case, the academy takes the lead role in arranging appointments. Young people spoken with said that that they can visit a General Practitioner in private if they so wish. The physical, emotional and mental health needs of the students are identified and detailed in individual health care plans and are regularly reviewed. Students have excellent access to speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, physiotherapy and psychological support. There is also access to a community nurse. The academy has a sick bay that can be accessed during school hours.

Documentation viewed confirmed that care staff receive first aid training and specialist training from a qualified nurse in stoma care, epilepsy, diabetes and the use of epi-pen. Written records are kept of significant illnesses, accidents or injuries whilst placed at the school. However, some documentation viewed confirmed that the academy has not always obtained prior written permission from a person with parental responsibility for that child, for the administration of first aid and to seek medical, optical or dental treatment when required.

The academy has policies and written guidance for administering and storing medication. Medicines are kept safe and secure and there is a lockable fridge to store antibiotics and insulin. The academy maintains good records of all medicines that come into the school, from the pharmacy and from the student's permanent address. Spot checks were conducted on some stock levels and records were correct. Staff that administer medicines receive appropriate training. The academy maintains records for the administration of prescribed and non-prescribed medicines. At the last inspection it was noted that some recording sheets did not always include if medicines have been refused, the start date and end date of antibiotics and the maximum amount of medication that may be given in a specific period of time. A recommendation was made at the last inspection to address this but this has not been met. It was also noted that the process for the management of controlled drugs and the returning of medicines to the pharmacy was not robust.

Discussions with students differed in their views as to the quality of the meals. However, it is judged that the meals provided are varied, healthy and nutritious and meet individual dietary needs. Menus demonstrate that food from other countries is promoted, and there are always two choices of meal available and a salad bar, with salad accompaniments, cooked meat and cheese options. There is always a vegetarian option available. Mealtimes are well managed and adapted cutlery and crockery is provided. Students with specialist dietary needs are not excluded for mealtimes and sit with other children. Students in further education are encouraged and supported to prepare their own snacks and meals at evenings and weekends. This is part of their individual learning plan. Students have full access to drinks and snacks. Staff receive training in food hygiene and students who prepare their own meals are encouraged to undertake this training.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Student's privacy is respected and information about them is confidentially handled; those spoken with confirmed that their privacy is promoted and respected. The privacy and confidentiality policy is due for renewal. It was noted that the academy's policy does not contain written guidance on when it may be necessary to search personal possessions. Students are able to make and receive telephone calls and text messages in private and computer systems have appropriate security systems.

The academy has a robust complaints policy. There have been four recorded complaints since the last inspection. Records viewed confirmed that all complaints have been satisfactorily resolved. Students spoken with understood what to do if they wished to make a complaint.

The welfare of students is promoted, children are protected from abuse, and an appropriate response is made to any allegation or suspicion of abuse. Care staff spoken with demonstrated a clear understanding of safeguarding procedures and

were able to state the names of the nominated persons at the school responsible for safeguarding issues. Documentation viewed confirmed that staff receive regular safeguarding training. The principal and head of care stated that there have not been any safeguarding issues since the last inspection.

Students are protected from bullying by others. The academy has an anti-bullying policy but this does not make reference to cyber bullying. The head of care confirmed that such matters will be included when the policy is reviewed in the near future. Discussions with students identified that if there are any matters relating to bullying these are taken seriously and acted upon.

Any significant events in relation to the protection of students at the academy are notified to the appropriate authorities. Students who are absent without authority are protected in accordance with written guidance and responded to positively on return.

All students are encouraged to develop appropriate behaviour through encouragement of acceptable behaviour and constructive staff responses to inappropriate behaviour. The academy has written policies and procedures on the control, disciplinary and physical intervention measures which may be used. However, the academy promotes the use of de-escalation and physical restraint is used only as a last resort. Documentation viewed confirmed that the use of physical restraint is kept to a minimum. Good records are maintained for the use of physical intervention and sanctions, and these are regularly audited. Students have detailed individual behaviour management plans that include approaches, known triggers and a risk assessment. All staff receive training in the use of de-escalation and restraint.

The academy is very pro-active in promoting health and safety and fire safety. Regular fire drills and testing of the emergency lighting, fire alarms and fire equipment are undertaken. The premises risk assessment is dated May 2008.

There is careful selection and vetting of all staff, volunteers, and monitoring of visitors to the academy to prevent students being exposed to potential abusers. Staff do not work with any students in residential services until a satisfactory enhanced Criminal Record Bureau has been obtained.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The academy's residential provision actively supports student's educational progress. Students have access to books and other educational resources to assist with their education outside class time. There is good communication between the care staff and education staff in order to promote continuity in care and support.

The academy provides an excellent range and choice of activities for students outside class time. Younger children spoke with enthusiasm about the type of activities that are available to them and commented that they are 'fun'. Such

activities include; bowling, cinema, football matches, visits to the beach, ice skating, electronic games, DVD and a variety of board games. Notice boards in the college area show a range of activities on offer such as canoeing and rock climbing. College students have access to common rooms enabling them to meet each other informally and provides plenty of space and a separate television lounge. There is a pleasant, relaxed atmosphere. Supervised and unsupervised activities take into account the safety of students and where high or unusual hazards are involved, a recorded risk assessment is made.

The school ensures that children and young people receive individualised support. The school operates the key worker system. Students confirmed that they have access to a variety of staff they can speak to about personal problems or concerns.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Students are fully encouraged and supported to make decisions about their lives and to influence the way the academy is run. All staff were observed to be consulting with students on a day-to-day basis and involving them in decision making. The academy fully promotes the use of BSL and is totally committed in ensuring that care staff are trained in its use. There has been an improvement in the number of staff trained in BSL and most staff are trained at level 3. Other alternative methods of communication are promoted depending on the individual needs of the student. The academy has a student council and minutes are kept of all meetings that are held. The principal and head of care confirmed that matters relating to the residential provision will be a standing item on future meetings.

Students have sound relationships with staff based on mutual respect. Care staff are able to set and maintain safe, consistent and understandable boundaries in relation to acceptable behaviour. Care staff were observed to be taking time to communicate with students using the student's preferred method of communication. The academy ensures that students receive the appropriate care and where assessed, some students are supported on a one-to-one basis throughout the day and evening. Students spoken with were very complimentary of the care staff.

The academy ensures that students experience planned and sensitively handled admission and leaving processes and provides prospective students and their families with comprehensive brochures and information. The academy holds welcome/open days and college students give presentations to prospective parents and their children. If appropriate the academy will arrange overnight visits.

Students have their needs thoroughly assessed and written plans clearly detail how these needs are to be met. Care plans viewed were very well maintained and contained comprehensive information. The care plans are monitored by a key worker. The personal files contained guidance in relation to the management of behaviours, religious needs, communication needs, the setting and reviewing of

targets and educational records and achievements. College students' files contain individual learning plans and assessments of daily living skills. Care plans are regularly reviewed and amended. The academy contributes to statutory reviews.

The academy ensures that students are able and encouraged to maintain contact with their parents and families while living away from home. Students benefit from having access to video conferencing facilities to maintain contact with parents that may live some distance away. This facility is also used for reviews.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

College students are encouraged to prepare their own meals in the evenings and to be as independent as possible, based on their individual assessed needs. Some college students were observed to be learning to manage the traffic and cross the road safely. Each student has an independent learning plan. College care staff confirmed that much of the conversation and support of an evening focuses on students becoming more independent. Students spoken with stated that they are encouraged to become more independent and learn new skills.

The principal stated that there has been continued delays in the ability to further proceed with the planned re-provision of the academy. However, the academy ensures that all interested stakeholders are kept informed. In the mean time the academy has ensured that there is a continued programme of maintenance, repair and refurbishment in operation. This includes the replacement of furniture and the re-decoration of some accommodation areas. The accommodation areas for younger children are homely, child friendly and welcoming and children spoken with stated that they are very happy with their bedrooms. However, some college students are dissatisfied with the size of their bedrooms and the lack of storage space in them. The principal acknowledged this and stated that these issues will be addressed as part of the academy's refurbishment and redecoration programme.

There are sufficient bathing and toilet facilities for the number of students accommodated and all facilities have appropriate locks fitted to promote privacy and safety. Aids and adaptations are provided to meet individual needs of students.

The academy grounds are well maintained and adaptations to the environment have been made to promote health and safety and to those students with additional mobility needs.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. The academy has robust

policies and guidance in matters relating to the promotion of equality and diversity. No student is deemed unable to make their needs and views known, regardless of their ability. All staff receive training in BSL, and other methods of communication are also promoted. Care plans clearly identify the religious needs of students. Menus viewed demonstrate that food from other countries is provided and specific religious diets can be catered for. Students are supported to access leisure and community facilities with other local children and young people.

The academy has a clear statement of the academy's care principles and practice for boarding students. There are adequate records of students and staff at the academy. The academy's staffing policy ensures that the level of staffing is able to meet the needs of the students. A large number of students receive one-to-one support during waking hours. Care staff stated that they have adequate staffing levels at all times. Agency staff are now rarely used. The academy has systems in place to address unpredictable staff sickness to ensure continuity and consistency of care.

Staff have access to training and development opportunities to meet the needs of the students, and each staff member has a personal development plan and a record of the training that they have received. All staff receive mandatory training that includes safeguarding, first aid, fire awareness and de-escalation and restraint training. Staff spoken with stated that they are very pleased and happy with the training that is provided. However, some staff commented that training in autism and emotional and behavioural disorders would be beneficial. This was discussed at feedback and the principal commented that this will be further explored. Staff receive appropriate levels of supervision and an annual appraisal.

Students receive care from competent staff. The academy is fully committed in ensuring that it has a competent and well-qualified workforce and at present exceeds the requirement that 80 per cent of care staff have completed NVQ at level 3 or above or beginning to work towards the qualification. The head of care has appropriate qualifications and experience. The academy ensures that the staff rota facilitates time for regular staff supervision, appraisals, staff meetings and time with students.

The school is efficiently run and the principal ensures that there are robust systems in place for half-termly and termly monitoring with detailed records kept. Members of the governing body make regular visits to the school and monitor the welfare of the students. However, it was noted that the documentation of the visits by the members of the governing body do not report on checks of the academy's records of complaints that have been received.

What must be done to secure future improvement?

Compliance with national minimum standards

The school meets all the national minimum standards, with the exception of any listed below. To ensure that the school meets the national minimum standards the school needs to...

- ensure that the school obtains prior written permission from a person with parental responsibility for that child, for the administration of first aid and to seek medical, optical or dental treatment when required (NMS 14.10)
- ensure that the medicines recording sheets include when medicines have been refused, and the start date and end date of antibiotics (NMS 14)
- ensure that two staff signatures are obtained for the recording of the administration and stock levels of controlled medication, and when returning unwanted medicines to the pharmacy, the name of the child for whom the medication was prescribed is listed (NMS 14)
- ensure that written guidance is provided to staff and children on when it may be necessary to search personal possessions (NMS 3.11)
- ensure that the anti-bullying policy includes reference to cyber bullying and the action taken to address this (NMS 6.2)
- ensure that the academy's refurbishment and redecoration plan addresses matters relating to the size of some bedrooms and bedroom storage facilities (NMS 24.5)
- ensure that the visits by members of the governing body report on the checks of the academy's complaints. (NMS 33.3)