

King's Mill School

Welfare inspection report for a residential special school

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Inspector Helen Walker / Robert Curr

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out under the Children Act 1989, as amended by the Care Standards Act 2000, having regard to the national minimum standards for residential special schools, in order to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided.^{1,2}

Information about the school

King's Mill School is a local authority maintained residential special school. The school provides education for up to 80 children aged five to 16 years, who have a range of learning disabilities and autism.

The school has a separate residential facility on site. Currently 35 pupils use the residential facility. Up to 15 pupils stay at the residential facility each night. Pupils stay at the residence for short breaks of one or two nights per week on a regular basis. Some pupils also stay at weekends and for part of the school holidays. The school is situated in a residential area in the market town of Driffield. The residential and education provision were last inspected in October 2010.

¹ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/contents.

² www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/a00192112/boarding-schools.

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	good
Outcomes for residential pupils	good
Quality of residential provision and care	good
Residential pupils' safety	good
Leadership and management of the residential provision	good

Overall effectiveness

The key findings of the residential inspection are as follows.

- The overall effectiveness of the school's residential provision is good. Equality and diversity is well-promoted throughout the school and residential provision. Residential pupils look forward to their stay at the school and benefit from many opportunities to participate in a wide range of fun activities. Residential pupils make friends during their stay and enjoy their company. Relationships between staff and residential pupils are warm, caring and relaxed. The residential experience enhances all aspects of pupil's social and personal development. They grow in confidence and staff help them reach to their full potential.
- The provision provides a high quality spacious environment which is comfortably furnished, pleasantly decorated, homely and clean. Residential pupils take advantage of the sensory room and safe indoor and outside play areas at the school.
- The safety of residential pupils is given high priority. Pupils say they feel safe within the residential provision. There are effective safeguarding arrangements and staff understand their role to protect pupils from harm. Partnership working and good communication between parents; care and school staff, including the school's home link worker, positively promote pupils good behaviour.
- Residential pupils health is given high regard. A healthy lifestyle is encouraged. The school have excellent links to a range of health care professionals which enables residential pupils health needs to be met. Meals within the residence are of high quality, appetising and varied. Pupils have choice of foods, eat heartily and enjoy their meals.
- The residential provision is well organised and definitely run for the benefit of the

pupils. Pupils opinions and views are valued and they contribute to the improvements in the residential facility. The head of care ensures sufficient and experienced staff are on duty to care for and meet the needs of the pupils.

- Residential pupils have a wide choice of leisure activities. There is staff support and access to shopping trips, baking sessions, swimming, days out to the seaside, ice shows and many more interesting activities.
- The national minimum standards have not been fully met. Three recommendations made at this inspection relate to ensuring staff receive regular supervision and that monitoring systems of the residential provision are robust and include review of policies. Also that staff's learning and development programme is evaluated for effectiveness at least annually and is updated if necessary.
- The school has addressed all but one of the recommendations from the previous inspection. The residential provision has areas of strength and no weaknesses which have a direct impact on the outcomes for residential pupils.

Outcomes for residential pupils

Outcomes for residential pupils are good. Their experience of the residential facility is extremely positive. Residential pupils say one of the best things about residential is being able to spend time with friends. Parents say 'my child adores the residential' and 'staff help my child to develop friendships and social skills'. Residential pupils were polite and respectful of each other. Relationships between staff and residential pupils are warm and caring; staff are attentive and responsive to them. In particular, residential pupil's individual needs such as at mealtimes and their personal care is very well regarded. The residential experience enables pupils to develop their self-esteem and confidence through positive friendships and supportive care.

Residential pupils take an active part to influence the residential provision. They are involved with the decision making for the décor and furnishings in the new residence. Pupils talked of their membership on the school council and how their requests about menus and activities are listened to and changes made as a result of this. Pupils are able to have a choice of bedroom and whenever possible continue to use the same room at each stay in residence. Some pupils prefer to use the twin bed room and enjoy the chat and company of another residential pupil. Pupils participate in activities in the wider community and are involved in a range of fund raising events. This enables pupils to gain an understanding about other people living in different communities and social situations.

Residential pupils are actively involved to keep themselves fit and lead a healthy lifestyle, including making healthy food choices. Staff understand residential pupil's individual health care needs. They ensure good access to a range of health professionals to benefit their physical, emotional and psychological health. Residential pupils have effective support from staff to help them develop their life

skills. This is tailored to their individual needs. For example, some pupils learn to keep their bedroom tidy, learn the value of money and know how to use a mobile phone. Appropriate links with other agencies ensure pupils have the right level of support in their transitional year at the school.

Quality of residential provision and care

The quality of the residential provision is good. Residential pupils' personal and social well-being is significantly promoted by staff who are supportive and provide a very good level of supervision and care. However, not all residential pupils have a placement plan or other written information about their care needs within the residential provision. This means staff are not well informed of residential pupils' assessed needs and how these are to be met. Care staff participate in a comprehensive duty shift handover meeting where any issues of note or concern about pupils' care needs are discussed. Staff therefore have good immediate information to support them in their work with residential pupils. Those pupils with placement plans have a holistic assessment of needs and reviews of the plan are child centred.

Residential and school staff work well together to enable residential pupils to benefit from the school's 24-hour curriculum. This provides residential pupils with stability of care, support and varied learning opportunities which take account of their personal needs and interests. Parents confirm their child's induction into the residential environment was set at an appropriate level and pace which resulted in an enjoyable experience for their child. Parents say 'it is absolutely fabulous; we wouldn't send our child anywhere else.'

Residential pupils have many opportunities to enhance their personal development and confidence through staffs well coordinated activity planning. They participate in a range of school topics which staff link to their stay in residence. For example, residential pupils enjoyed baking bread in the residence as part of the school's celebration of 'harvest festival'. The school is proactive to embrace different cultures, religions and beliefs so that pupils gain a better understanding about tolerance and respect for others. The Hindu festival of Diwali is another stimulating and positive cultural experience residential pupils engage in through the contact with Indian families, craftwork and exhibitions in school.

Health practitioners visit the school on a regular basis providing residential pupils with advice and guidance. Visiting health professionals include a paediatrician, speech and language therapist and physiotherapist. Residential pupils talk with confidence about their contact with health professionals, for example, the support from the occupational therapist which residential pupils consider helps to improve their mobility. Additionally, pupils have use of the school's hydrotherapy pool for exercise and relaxation. Arrangements for the administration and storage of medication are clear, well organised and effective.

Residential pupils are offered substantial, varied and nutritional meals. A dietician visits the school regularly and advises on healthy menus and pupil's individual dietary needs. Residential pupils have ready access to fruit and snacks within the residence. Mealtimes are very social occasions where pupils enjoy appetising homemade meals prepared by cooks on site. Staff are quick to take action when a pupil needs support, for example, to assist a pupil to use cutlery or to effectively defuse episodes of disruptive behaviour at the dining table.

Extensive building work and refurbishment of the residence has significantly improved the residential facilities for pupils. Building work is not yet complete but this does not have a detrimental impact on pupil's welfare or their care. However, the storage facilities within the home are limited. The lack of cupboards, shelves and drawer space has left some bathrooms cluttered with personal health products. This is unsightly and reduces space available in the bathroom. Overall, the residence is spacious, light, airy and very pleasantly decorated. Residential pupils are really excited and pleased with the new residence and are able to personalise their bedrooms and bring their own bed linen for their stay. Some residential pupils particularly enjoy using the well equipped sensory room for its calming effect. All residential pupils have access to a telephone and are able to contact their families.

Residential pupils' safety

The school makes good provision for safeguarding residential pupil's welfare. Members of the school senior management team receive safer recruitment training and understand the need for robust recruitment and employment practice for staff. This practice ensures that only suitably checked people work with pupils. There is guidance for the use of information technology, such as mobile phones, digital cameras and the internet which supports residential pupils appropriate and safe use of this equipment

Residential pupils are looked after by staff who understand safeguarding procedures. Residential pupils say they feel safe and well looked after at the school. Parents reiterate this and consider their child is 'very safe'. Staff have child protection training and know what to do in the event of concerns about a pupil's safety. Clear procedures and guidance are followed so that concerns are promptly passed to the relevant safeguarding agency and dealt with properly. This practice means staff put children's welfare first.

Staff are aware of the school's whistle blowing policy. However, the policy has not been reviewed for a number of years and staff are not very familiar or confident with its content. This hinders staff ability to further protect residential pupils.

Residential pupils benefit from good health and safety arrangements at the school. Senior staff responsible for health and safety are enthusiastic and fully committed to providing a safe school and residential environment. Residential pupils are protected from hazards associated with fire, water, electrical safety and also from going

missing. Substantial investment in security and safety measures in the residential environment and school grounds demonstrates the school's commitment to pupil's safety and well being. Staff understand their responsibilities so that the health and safety of pupils, staff and visitors is not compromised.

Residential pupil's behaviour is positively managed. This is a real strength of the school and involves a great deal of partnership working with parents, care and education staff, the school's home link worker and health professionals. Regular 'behaviour management clinics' in the school, support staff to understand and manage residential pupils behaviour in a caring, calm and well informed way. This prevents behaviour escalating to a level where residential pupils place themselves and others at risk of harm. This approach is highly effective and means the use of physical intervention in the school is rare.

Bullying is not an issue at this time. This is confirmed by written responses from residential pupils and parents. Discussion with residential pupils shows there are occasions when they consider other residential pupils to be 'bossy'. Staff are vigilant and provide extremely good supervision so that these situations are few but are dealt with quickly and effectively which enables pupils to feel safe.

Leadership and management of the residential provision

Leadership and management of the school is good. Management of the residential facility runs smoothly and pupils are well supported and cared by a consistent staff team. Major building work and refurbishment of the residential facility caused a lengthy closure and break in the provision of short stays at the school. However, the work significantly improves the residential facilities for pupils. During the closure the management and staff worked exceptionally hard to continue and extend extra-curricular activities for residential pupils. This is a really good achievement and enabled pupils to maintain links with their school friends and consistent contact with residential staff.

The high quality, refurbished residence opened in September 2011 for residential stays. Modifications, aids and adaptations in the residence substantially support residential pupils who have limited mobility. This includes lift access to the first floor of the residence. Systems and procedures relating to the residential facility continue to be embedded in staff routines as staff familiarise themselves with the new environment and care practice. Guidance and information documents for pupils, parents and significant others are still to be updated to reflect the current residential provision and service.

Residential pupils benefit from sufficient staff on duty who understand their diverse needs, provide continuity of care, clear routines and boundaries. Staff are well trained, experienced and treat residential pupils with dignity, sensitivity and fairness. However, training records to show the overall competences and abilities of the whole staff team are difficult to track and audit so that skills updates and qualifications are

identified.

Residential pupils say their stay at the residence is 'brill', 'tremendous' and they 'love it.' The school offer enriched learning opportunities which promote pupil's inclusion and participation in school life and the wider community. Staff communicate effectively with residential pupils and successfully develop their confidence and self esteem. Parents consider the staff involve them in all aspects of their child's life at the school. Parents say communication with staff is very good, both verbally and with the use of the residence to home diary.

The school have a range of mechanisms to evaluate the work of staff and care within the residential facility. This includes the use of reports and information from governors who report on the residential care. The governors also support various sub-groups to ensure the safety, welfare and learning opportunities of all pupils are taken into account. However, reports are not drawn together to establish the areas for development and strengths in the residential facility. This includes review of policies such as 'whistle blowing'. The headteacher confirms an overarching comprehensive monitoring system has been developed and will be implemented to improve outcomes for residential pupils.

Staff have access to management support. However, supervision is not prioritised to ensure staff have regular individual opportunities to discuss their work, working relationships or professional development with a senior member of staff. Staff are aware of the school and residential policies which are mostly up-to-date and helpful to the support of residential pupils. All information is appropriately and safely stored to ensure confidentiality of records is maintained. Records kept at the school are informative and assist staff to care for residential pupils.

The process for dealing with complaints is clear with a process of investigation and outcome to the complainant. Residential pupils are seen to be confident and approach staff without hesitation. External advocacy agencies also visit the residential facility and promote participation work with pupils. This gives them an opportunity to make a complaint to those independent of the school.

The majority of recommendations from the previous inspection have been met and benefit the well being of residential pupils. For example, the residential facility now maintains accurate records of medication. Still outstanding is the recommendation for staff to receive regular supervision.

National minimum standards

The school must meet the following national minimum standards for residential special schools.

- All staff have access to support and advice for their role. They also have regular

supervision and formal annual appraisal of their performance. (NMS 19.6)

- The Head teacher (or school equivalent), governing body, trustees, partnership, or organisation responsible for carrying on the school carries out, and records in writing, once each year: a review of the operation and resourcing of the school's welfare provision for boarding pupils, in relation to: - its Statement of Purpose, its staffing policy, the placement plans for individual children; and an internal assessment of its compliance with these Standards. Where appropriate such a report may be incorporated within a review of the whole school. (NMS 20.4)
- The learning and development programme is evaluated for effectiveness at least annually and is updated if necessary. (NMS 19.4)

What should the school do to improve further?

- ensure written information relating to residential pupils assessed needs is contained in pupils residential files and available to staff
- provide sufficient storage facilities within the residence so that bedrooms and bathrooms remain tidy and clutter free
- ensure full information about the new residence and changes to the service are available to pupils, parents and significant others.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



13/10/2011

Residential pupils

Inspection of King's Mill School

Thank you so much for being really helpful, friendly and polite during our visit. It was great fun to talk to you and lovely to see you so happy and excited about your short break stay.

The new residence is a real improvement on the old one. It is much bigger, brighter and has many different rooms for you to use. It looks and feels very homely and comfortable. Some of you particularly like the twin bedroom with the shower room. You say you like the twin bedroom because it gives you the opportunity to share a room with your school friend.

We think the school provides really good care and the accommodation is extremely good quality. The staff care for you very well and they know how to keep you safe. We are really pleased to hear that you feel safe and that there are people who you can talk to during your stay.

You have lots of choice at mealtimes and staff encourage you to eat healthily. We enjoyed being with you at mealtimes and it was so nice to see the fun and laughter between you and the staff. You were all well behaved and very respectful of each other.

Lots of exciting activities happen during your stay and it was delightful to see how much you look forward to them. Some of you went swimming; others did craftwork or enjoyed the sensory room. You have lots of charity fund raising events to help others, such as supporting an overseas school. Well done for doing so much!

We have asked the school to make some improvements for your benefit. This is about record keeping, monitoring records and staff supervision. This will help the headteacher and head of care have a better understanding about how well the staff look after you. We have asked that there are more cupboards and shelves in the residence so that the bedrooms and bathrooms are not cluttered up with all sorts of different things.

Yours sincerely,

Helen Walker and Rob Curr

Social Care Inspectors

Yours sincerely,

Helen Walker / Robert Curr