

The Marchant-Holliday School

Welfare inspection report for a residential special school

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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

Marchant-Holliday School is an approved independent charitable residential special school. It is managed by a board of governors, who are also trustees, and by a senior management team. The school is situated in rural surroundings three miles from the nearest town, Wincanton.

The Marchant-Holliday School provides residential and day education. The school provides residential accommodation for up to a maximum of 34 residential pupils. It is a boys' school for pupils aged five to 13 years old who have social, emotional and behaviour difficulties with additional complex needs. At the time of the inspection there were 18 residential pupils and eight day students. Residential pupils are accommodated in one of two boarding houses which are split into accommodating younger and older pupils. All residential pupils go home at weekends at least once every two weeks.

The residential provision was last inspected in February 2011.

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

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

Inspection judgements

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

Overall effectiveness

The key findings of the residential inspection are as follows.

- The overall effectiveness of Marchant-Holliday School is outstanding. The school provides strong and effective leadership which positively impacts on the overall care provided to residential pupils.
- The school is fully compliant with all recommendations made at previous inspections.
- Effective and robust safeguarding practices are implemented for the safety and well-being of residential pupils.
- Residential pupils are cared for by a sufficient number of staff who are qualified, competent and have considerable experience in the care of young people. Staff continue to enhance their skills and expertise through attending appropriate training.
- Residential pupils live in a warm, nurturing, structured, supportive and relaxed environment. Positive relationships exist between the residential pupils and staff. The parents of residential pupils value the care and support provided to their children.
- Effective communication is maintained between the school and the residential provision. This enables residential pupils to make significant progress emotionally, socially and academically, which in turn enhances their self-esteem and confidence.
- The behaviour management of the residential pupils is excellent and assists them to make significant progress.
- The health and dietary needs of residential pupils are fully met.

- The promotion of equality is well understood and practiced well within the residential provision. The diverse and complex needs of residential pupils are well catered for.
- All the national minimum standards are met.

Outcomes for residential pupils

Outcomes for residential pupils are outstanding. Residential pupils live in a warm, nurturing, structured, supportive and relaxed environment. Positive relationships exist between residential pupils themselves and with staff. Staff undertake their duties in a very caring and supportive manner and residential pupils are relaxed and at ease in their company. Residential pupils enjoy and benefit from the positive experience they receive from boarding. They are supported to make significant progress emotionally, socially and academically. This in turn enhances their self-esteem and confidence. This progress is fully reflected in the review minutes of residential pupils and supported by comments made by their parents and various professionals.

Residential pupils feel safe and are treated fairly by staff. These sentiments are supported by comments made by their parents who also feel that staff look after their children well. They feel that the boarding experience helps their children to develop and make significant progress. The parents also feel that residential staff recognise their children as individuals and are responsive to their individual needs.

Residential staff actively and effectively promote good behaviour. The support residential pupils receive enables them to make significant progress. Some residential pupils confirmed that the school has assisted them in improving their behaviour.

The school operates a positive culture of consultation. Residential pupils are encouraged to contribute to decision making regarding developments to the school and the residential provision. The school council is well established and contributes positively to the overall provision. Residential staff also fully support and encourage residential pupils to make decisions on a daily basis. They are supported to express their views freely about any issues, which staff listen to and act upon.

Residential pupils live in an environment where their physical, emotional and healthcare needs are well met.

Quality of residential provision and care

The quality of care provided to residential pupils is good. Residential pupils receive an excellent standard of care and support from dedicated staff who are committed to providing them with a high level of care. Excellent communication systems are established between residential and teaching staff. These actively support residential pupils' personal and academic development. Teaching staff are actively involved in

the residential and out-of-school activities and likewise residential staff also support residential pupils with their educational needs.

The needs of residential pupils are fully assessed as part of the admission process. Although residential pupils are provided with a care plan, this does not reflect how they are cared for on a daily basis. However, the care plan, together with a range of other documents, reflect the needs, strengths, targets and progress achieved by residential pupils. These documents are regularly reviewed and updated to reflect the changing needs of residential pupils. Residential pupils are provided with the opportunity to contribute to their annual reviews.

Residential pupils take part in a vast range of age-appropriate recreational activities. These occur both within the school and in the wider community. There are indoor and outdoor sporting facilities, with several different clubs on offer each day. There are large wooded and wildlife areas around the school to support and develop the interests of residential pupils. Residential pupils are consulted about what activities they wish to take part in. Personal talents and interests are also fully supported. Several residential pupils attend local cub and scout groups and sporting clubs.

Residential pupils live in an environment where their physical, emotional and healthcare needs are well met. This is achieved through the close, supportive and effective working arrangements established between the school, the parents of residential pupils and the range of healthcare services used. Most residential pupils feel well cared for if ill, with suitable facilities and effective procedures being established. The matron, who is a qualified nurse, oversees the healthcare arrangements for residential pupils. She works well, in conjunction with the residential staff and specialist services, to promote the health, welfare and well-being of residential pupils. They provide residential pupils with the individual support to assist them in developing their self-esteem as well as dealing with specific emotional and behaviour issues. Residential pupils are fully supported to take responsibility for their healthcare needs. This is achieved through the school's programme of personal, social and health education as well as within the residential provision. Appropriate practices and arrangements are well established for the safe storage, receipt and administration of medication. However, the initials of two members of staff are not always entered when controlled drugs are administered.

The school actively promotes healthy eating for residential pupils. They are provided with a nutritious, varied and balanced diet. The religious, cultural and special diets of residential pupils are well catered for where required. Residential pupils are encouraged to try and develop their taste for different foods. A lot of success has been achieved in this area of practice, which in some cases has been of benefit when they go home. Residential pupils are able to access drinks and snacks as well as a selection of fresh fruit on a daily basis. Mealtimes are conducted in a relaxed and congenial setting where open discussion is fully promoted. Good table manners are promoted and reinforced. Residential pupils are happy with the range, quality and quantity of food provided.

The residential provision provides excellent facilities to meet the individual and collective needs of the residential pupils. These are maintained to a high standard, being clean, tidy and comfortable. The provision is also well furnished and in good decorative order. Residential pupils are accommodated in one of two houses. Both houses provide good communal space, together with a good number of bath, shower and toilet facilities, to meet the individual and collective needs of residential pupils. Suitable locks are fitted to these facilities to promote their privacy and dignity. Apart from a four-bedroom dormitory, residential pupils are provided with single or double bedrooms. Many of these are also provided with en-suite facilities. Residential pupils are supported to personalise their bedrooms to their individual tastes. A large number of residential pupils expressed concern about the safety of their personal belongings. Although residential pupils are discouraged from bringing personal valuables to school, there are facilities within the provision to keep them safe. However, these do not include lockable facilities within their bedrooms. Bedroom door alarms and listening devices are fitted to all residential pupils' bedrooms. However, the current practice of using them routinely for child protection reasons and to monitor any potential distress at night rather than based on individual risk assessments which are suitably documented is inappropriate.

Residential pupils' contact arrangements with their families are positively promoted and supported. They are provided with easy access to the school's landline telephones which they are encouraged to use in private. The school maintains an open and welcoming policy whereby families and other agencies involved with pupils are also welcome to visit at any time. Residential staff maintain strong links with the parents of residential pupils. A variety of effective communication systems are well established. These ensure that parents are kept informed of their children's ongoing progress and well-being.

Residential pupils' safety

The school makes excellent provision to fully safeguard the welfare of residential pupils. Robust safeguarding policies and procedures are in place, with staff receiving appropriate training. Staff have a very good understanding of how to safeguard residential pupils. The school maintains strong links with the Local Safeguarding Children Board to ensure that any potential or safeguarding concerns are referred promptly to them. This practice ensures that residential pupils are protected from harm.

The school has effective procedures to protect residential pupils from bullying. An anti-bullying policy is well established for their protection. The majority of residential pupils and their parents do not see bullying as an area of concern, although there are some residential pupils who do see it as an issue. Staff acknowledge that there is some bullying, however, all parties feel that incidents of bullying are dealt with promptly and effectively. The inspector witnessed the effectiveness of this practice during the inspection.

The school has effective policies and procedures to deal with any incidents where residential pupils go missing to ensure their safety. There has been only one incident of a residential pupil going missing since the last inspection. Appropriate procedures ensure that any incidents are dealt with promptly which ensures the safe return of residential pupils at the earliest opportunity. These procedures also ensure that residential pupils are responded to positively on their return.

Residential staff actively and effectively promote good behaviour. This is achieved through very positive relationships, encouragement and the reinforcement of positive praise. A token system is well established throughout the school and residential provision for good behaviour and for trying hard in school. Some parents also use the system at home to effectively manage their children's behaviour. The emphasis is to enable pupils to make positive choices. Residential pupils are clear about the expectations placed on them by the school and conduct themselves in an exemplary way, being polite and well mannered. The support they receive enables them to make significant progress in the management of their behaviour, both at the school and within their homes. Some residential pupils confirmed that the school has assisted them in improving their behaviour. Staff are suitably trained in the use of physical intervention. Sanctions and restraints are used as and when necessary with comprehensive records being maintained.

The school takes positive steps to keep residential pupils and staff safe from the risk of fire and other hazards in accordance with health and safety and fire legislation and guidance. A tour of the premises identified no significant health and safety issues. Residential pupils and staff regularly practise fire evacuation procedures. Effective systems are in place to ensure that the various fire and health and safety checks, tests and servicing arrangements are carried out within the required intervals. Detailed risk assessments are also carried out in respect of all activities undertaken by residential pupils and to the building. These are reviewed and updated where appropriate.

Robust staff recruitment procedures and practices are maintained for the protection of residential pupils. New staff do not commence employment in the school until all the relevant checks are completed.

Leadership and management of the residential provision

The school maintains strong and effective leadership. This ensures that the management of the residential provision is outstanding. Clear lines of accountability are established throughout the staffing structure of the school. The headteacher is supported by a strong management team who are well qualified and have considerable experience. Staff within the residential provision are extremely committed to ensuring that residential pupils receive the best level of care and support.

The aims for the residential provision are clearly set out in the school's Statement of Purpose and are reflected in the practice provided. The school's Statement of Purpose and young people's guide provide residential pupils and their parents with clear information. This describes the level of care and service residential pupils can expect to receive. The promotion of equality is well understood and practiced consistently within the residential provision. The diverse and complex needs of residential pupils are well catered for.

The general routines of the residential provision are extremely well managed. Good staffing levels are well established within the residential provision. These ensure that the individual and collective care needs of the residential pupils are met. Residential pupils are cared for by a stable and extremely experienced staff team. The school ensures that there are always suitably qualified and experienced staff on duty at all times.

Residential pupils are well looked after by a staff team who are trained and competent to meet their individual care needs. Residential staff are supported and encouraged to update their knowledge, skill and expertise by attending ongoing training. Residential staff commented positively about training opportunities available to them. Most of the staff team have achieved the relevant qualification.

Residential staff are extremely positive about the support they receive from all levels within the school. Excellent communication systems are well established. These ensure that staff are kept up to date about the day-to-day operation of the residential provision and the residential pupils. This also ensures that residential pupils receive consistency of care. Residential staff receive formal and informal supervision as well as annual appraisals. As a result the professional development and practices of residential staff are properly managed and adequately monitored. However, supervisors are not maintaining copies of the supervision records of staff in line with best practice.

The school maintains regular and positive links with the parents of residential pupils. This ensures that they are provided with information relating to the progress and well-being of their children. Parents feel that the residential provision is well organised and effectively managed. Residential staff are also easily contactable and respond appropriately to any concerns.

Residential pupils and their parents are fully aware of how to complain. Residential pupils are clear that there are a number of people they can go to if they have concerns or worries and are confident that these would be fully acted upon. All complaints are responded to and addressed promptly.

The school ensures that the records of residential pupils are safely stored. Effective arrangements are also in place so that these records are comprehensively maintained and suitably monitored. The headteacher conducts regular monitoring reviews of different areas of service provision within the school and submits frequent reports to

the board of governors. In addition, the school is subject to regular monitoring visits from members of the school's governing body. Written reports are produced which identify any areas for internal development. The school now produces an overall annual review of the operation and resourcing of the school's residential provision. This ensures that the residential provision is being managed in line with its Statement of Purpose.

National minimum standards

The school meets the national minimum standards for residential special schools.

What should the school do to improve further?

- review the routine use of door alarms and listening devices fitted to all residential pupils' bedrooms
- review the practice for the administration for controlled drugs
- review the current format of residential pupils' care plans to ensure they reflect how the residential pupils' needs are met on a daily basis
- ensure that copies of the staff supervision records are maintained by their supervisors.

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.



18/10/2011

Dear Residential Pupils

Inspection of The Marchant-Holliday School

As you know, Ofsted recently inspected where you stay at your school. I spoke to some of you about living at the school. Most of you also filled in questionnaires, as did some of your parents. Your comments were very helpful to me. I have rated the residential provision, in my report, as being outstanding. This means that the school provides you with an excellent standard of care.

I think that there is an excellent atmosphere in the residential provision and that you are very well looked after. The school ensures that you feel safe and well cared for. You get plenty to eat and like the meals provided. You are provided with a vast range of activities which you can join in with after school. You enjoy the opportunities provided to you. I am very pleased to hear how well you are all doing and the support you receive from the staff to achieve this. You are provided with excellent accommodation. However, some of you felt that your belongings are not kept safe and I have raised this with the head of care and I hope that this will be addressed.

I found that overall the school is very well managed. I have made some suggestions to further improve some of the practices within the residential provision.

Yours sincerely,

Thomas Webber