

Millgate 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

Millgate is a maintained residential special school run by Leicester City Council. It caters for 55 boys with emotional, behavioural and social difficulties aged between 11 and 16 years. The school has a residential facility which is currently operating for two nights a week, term time only and can accommodate up to 10 students. This is going to be extended over the next few weeks to four nights a week. There are also facilities within the residence for students to attend an extended day provision. The residential accommodation is situated on the first floor of the school.

The school is in a residential area on the outskirts of the city. The residential provision was last inspected as part of an integrated inspection with education inspectors in March 2011.

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

² www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/a00192112/boardingschools.

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	outstanding

Overall effectiveness

The key findings of the residential inspection are as follows.

- The school's ethos and underpinning philosophy is strong throughout, ensuring students who board in 'the flat' are in a supportive and caring community within which they are valued and safe. Residential students develop good relationships with each other and with staff. They enjoy their experiences in 'the flat'.
- Residential students share communal areas well, showing acceptance of one another's differences. There are high levels of supervision which ensures residential students are supported at all times by staff who understand their individual and complex needs.
- Safeguarding is a priority at this school. Residential students feel safe and are safe.
- Socially acceptable behaviour is actively promoted and residential students are well-behaved and tolerant of each other, forming new friendships and enjoying positive relationships with staff.
- The school has made substantial progress from the last inspection and has now met all the national minimum standards.

Outcomes for residential pupils

Residential students enjoy their experiences in 'the flat', particularly the activities offered. They also make friends and have positive relationships with staff. Staff provide positive role models for residential students. This helps them to develop socially and provide them with a secure base on which they can depend when they are dealing with other complex issues within their own lives.

The residential experience encourages students to develop existing interests and hobbies and to learn new skills. Residential students access activities on site and in the community. These include golf, swimming and fishing. Residential students thoroughly enjoy these activities while improving their physical fitness, confidence and self-esteem.

Residential students feel that their views are actively sought and where possible, ideas are implemented. A residential student gave an example where he discussed with a manager his feelings about the lack of activities in the evening. This was rectified quickly by putting on an additional activity each evening in 'the flat' for students residing overnight. There is also an active school council and 'flat' meetings are occurring more frequently.

Residential students are prepared well for further education and adult life. They are helped to improve their independence skills, confidence and self-esteem through the broad range of activities provided. For example, they are shown how, where and when to catch a bus to a future college placement and learn to prepare their own meals.

Quality of residential provision and care

Staff provide structure and consistency to residential students. This is achieved through establishing good routines like having regular meals and a good night's sleep in a safe and secure environment. This enables residential students to access their education, focus and achieve. Students who stay in residence, even if only for one or two nights, significantly increase their attendance at school compared to students who do not access 'the flat'.

Staff view residential students positively and there is a relaxed, family atmosphere in 'the flat'. They ensure each residential student's individual needs and aspirations are fully addressed. Planning documentation is appropriate and staff know and understand the students very well and their achievements are celebrated.

Staff said that the best thing about working in 'the flat' is, 'the development of the boys. Knowing they have somewhere safe and secure to turn to.' They also said they have a number of former students return to the school who have been successful and to show their appreciation.

Residential students have mixed views about the quality of the food provided. Some food on the menu is healthier than other options especially meals served in the evenings. Residential students have plenty of food and drinks provided. Mealtimes are a sociable, relaxed occasion where residential students chat about their day with staff.

Residential students say that they enjoy the activities provided such as swimming,

golf, football and cooking. A residential student said that his speciality is lemon drizzle cake.

The emotional, psychological and physical health of students is promoted. Residential students understand what helps them to be healthy. Care staff work closely with the school nurse and other healthcare professionals. Students receive a good healthcare service, providing them with useful information about health related issues. This includes smoking cessation, sexual health, puberty and personal hygiene. Additionally, the school employs a councillor who works into the evening to be accessible to residential students. 'A school nurse said, 'Millgate does incredibly well with complex children; very specialised. Children thrive here where they haven't at other schools.'

Care staff build positive relationships with parents and carers, providing guidance and support to promote consistent good parenting for all residential students. This is a vital part of the service to not only promote good parenting but also to build positive relationships with residential students. Care staff also promote a positive image of the school by holding fund raising events that the local community and parents are invited to attend. This also helps to build a student's protective factors which will help them to cope with stressful situations within their lives.

Staff know and understand the residential students well. Care planning and risk assessments cover all the areas required. Care staff work closely with education to ensure a consistent whole school approach. A residential student gave examples of how care staff have helped him. This included helping him in school.

Staff sensitively manage any issues relating to equality and diversity. Residential students are encouraged to embrace other cultures and challenge discrimination. Students with particular religious beliefs are provided with an appropriate diet. Staff also spoke about showing culturally diverse films to residential students to broaden their knowledge and understanding. Furthermore, staff have taken residential students to the local homeless shelters to distribute excess food from the school. Staff in 'the flat' also sponsor a child from a third world country who the residential students keep in contact with. This encourages and promotes a depth of knowledge and tolerance of other cultures and religions.

'The flat' is a homely environment with good quality furnishings. Bedrooms are all single and residential students said they like their rooms. Communal areas are bright, comfortable and have photographs of residential students on the walls. 'The flat' is clean, tidy and well maintained.

Residential pupils' safety

Safeguarding students is a priority at this school. Staff have a comprehensive knowledge of the safeguarding procedures. The designated safeguarding person overseeing residence has a comprehensive knowledge of all safeguarding concerns

affecting residential students. Safeguarding concerns are managed effectively, ensuring that the appropriate services are involved where necessary.

Residential students feel safe and are safe. They choose to reside in 'the flat' and therefore do not put themselves at risk by going missing from the school. They report that bullying occurs infrequently in 'the flat'. A residential student said, 'No-one ever misbehaves up here, it's quite chilled.'

Behaviour that challenges is managed competently and professionally. Staff use a good incentive scheme which the residential students understand and enables them to develop socially acceptable behaviour. Staff receive training in physical intervention but rarely use it. The training focuses on de-escalation techniques which help to prevent the need for restraint. When physical intervention is used, it is for the right reasons and done in the right way. Residential students understand the rules and say they are fair. They are clear about the consequences of breaking the rules which they also say are fair.

Residential students know what to do when the fire alarm sounds. There are good fire safety procedures in place. The school also has robust health and safety procedures ensuring students are safe from identified hazards.

Strong vetting procedures of new staff ensure the safety of students. Furthermore, all visitors are asked to show identification and anyone who has not got an enhanced Criminal Records Bureau check is supervised at all times.

Leadership and management of the residential provision

The residential provision is an integral part of the school which has clear aims that are translated into practice. Staff are passionate and committed to providing a high quality service to the benefit of residential students ensuring their health, well-being and educational achievement.

The leadership team have ensured significant progress since the last inspection which has resulted in better outcomes for students. These have included medication procedures which are now given safely and in private. Students are appropriately protected from hazards such as ensuring the car park is a safer area. Care and education staff work closely together, ensuring consistent approaches towards students across the school. Care staff are qualified, competent and well supported. They have a good knowledge of the residential students ensuring they are able to actively promote students' health and well-being.

Residential students report that they know how to complain and who to complain to. The complaints procedure is accessible to all residential students. No complaints have been recorded.

Staff are qualified, caring, professional and competent. They attend a variety of

training courses throughout the year including mandatory and more specialist training covering topics such as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. They feel well supported by each other and the leadership team. This means that they are provided with opportunities to reflect and improve practice ensuring a high standard of care is provided to residential students.

The leadership team has a strong commitment to improving practice and ensuring the quality of the service provided. They have a clear vision for the future and how this will be implemented. The leadership team is currently working in partnership with the local authority to extend the school. This proposal includes plans to provide more residential provision in the form of accommodation to support students to live independently. They are also looking to utilise the residential facilities more fully by extending the offer of residence to students in their partner school.

The school has strong monitoring systems in place such as regular meetings between key members of staff and the leadership team and comprehensive electronic databases. These systems provide crucial information about students such as their individual needs, behaviour, targets and progress, therefore continually driving up standards. The governing body closely monitors the quality of the residential provision, supporting and challenging the leadership team where necessary.

National minimum standards

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

What should the school do to improve further?

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.



18/01/2012

Dear residential students

Inspection of Millgate School

Thank you for contributing to the recent inspection of 'the flat'. I enjoyed meeting and chatting with you.

As a result of the inspection the judgement for 'the flat' is good.

You told me you enjoy staying in 'the flat' and particularly enjoy the activities. I can see you are safe and that you get on well with staff. You said that very little bullying goes on and that staff are quick to stop bullying. You said that no-one misbehaves in 'the flat' as it's a place where you all 'chill'. You like 'the flat' and the staff.

Staff help you to stay healthy and make sure you eat well. You had mixed views about the quality of the food but on the whole it is OK.

Staff also support you in school and help you with becoming more independent. They are proud of the achievements you have made.

When an inspector next visits you will be able to discuss how things are going for you again.

Yours sincerely,

Joanne Vyas