

# Gretton School

Welfare inspection report for a residential special school

---

<b>DfE registration number</b>	873/6048
<b>Unique reference number for social care</b>	SC425708
<b>Unique reference number for education</b>	136047
<b>Inspection dates</b>	11/07/2012 to 12/07/2012
<b>Inspector</b>	Deirdra Keating

---

<b>School address</b>	Manor Farm Road, Girton, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire, CB3 0RX
<b>Telephone number</b>	01223 277438
<b>Email</b>	
<b>Headteacher</b>	Principal Mrs Deb Reynders-Carr Headteacher Ms Tina Harris Head of Care Ms Shelly Hayes

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)



## **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.<sup>1,2</sup>

## **Information about the school**

Gretton school is a independent residential special school for pupils of mixed gender aged between five and 19 years. It is privately owned by Piscari Limited and has 30 pupils on roll. Three of these pupils reside at the school for four nights a week. The residential accommodation is provided in two houses located on the school site. The school is situated in Girton village on the outskirts of Cambridge. The residential provision was last inspected in July 2012.

---

<sup>1</sup> [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/contents).

<sup>2</sup> [www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/a00192112/boarding-schools](http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/a00192112/boarding-schools).

## Inspection judgements

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>good</b>
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 residential provision has a positive impact on residential pupil's lives, enhancing their personal and social development.
- The good quality of care is inclusive and responsive in meeting the needs of each residential pupil.
- The leadership and management of the provision promote an organised safe and secure residential environment.
- The staff team is well supervised and of high calibre.
- The views of parents are consistent in their high praise of the residential school and its staff.
- There is a continued focus on development that drives improvement of the residential provision.
- There are some national minimum standards that are not fully met but these do not detract from the overall quality of care and have minimal impact on residential pupils.

## Outcomes for residential pupils

The outcomes for residential pupils are good. Residential pupils are comfortable, relaxed and at home in the residential provision. Surveys, observations and discussions demonstrate that a high percentage of pupils thoroughly enjoy staying in residence. Parents reiterate the benefits of the provision on pupils' personal development quoting they are 'excited about going, making more choices and

settling in well'.

Residential pupils benefit from positive relationships with staff, who they trust and enjoy spending time with. Comments from pupils included 'I like watching movies with my friends and my key worker; I like her and am sorry that she is ill'. Comments from staff highlight good relationships and included 'he's just a gem, making such good progress with behavioural incentives'. The behaviour and conduct of residential pupils' during residential time is very good. They are welcoming and polite, show kindness to visitors and tolerance of one another's differences with support from staff. They respond well to positive reinforcement from staff, and the calm nurturing environment. Residential pupil's ideas are sought and valued. They contribute to regular house meetings voicing their preferences regarding foods, activities, décor and trips out.

Residential pupils enjoy activities that develop their confidence and self-worth. They attend youth club, go swimming, visit the cinema and celebrate birthdays and achievements. There are traditional events and celebrations which residential pupils anticipate eagerly throughout the year. They help with preparations and this helps them develop confidence in their abilities and make a positive contribution. Residential pupils are secure and comfortable with staff support; they are motivated and keen to try out new activities. This helps them develop new interests, hobbies and skills.

Residential pupils learn many valuable skills toward their independence. These include the preparation of simple meals, snacks and the use of public transport. They also learn personal care skills and how to clean their rooms all of which will benefit them in adult life.

All areas of pupils' health are supported by the staff team, communication with parents and carers and effective links with external agencies. Pupils are fully supported with self-care, medication and personal hygiene. Parents summarise how beneficial this is for individual pupils. This all contributes to their overall emotional health and well-being.

## **Quality of residential provision and care**

The quality of the residential provision and care is good. Established links between residential and school staff result in very good residential care for pupils. These staff meet weekly to discuss the week ahead and ensure arrangements are in place to meet the individual needs of each pupil. A home-school book promotes communication between the school, residential workers and parents, promoting good continuity of care which meets the individual needs of each pupil.

Care plans state how each pupil is to be cared for and their health needs met. Individual behavioural management plans compiled by the school and residential staff give details and strategies on how to support each residential pupil. However,

the basis of the behaviour management plans relates mainly to the school environment. This does not detract from the individualised care provided in line with the unique characteristics and health needs of each pupil, supporting both their physical and physiological health needs.

The staff provide and facilitate a good range of activities for residential pupils both in residence and in the local community. This benefits pupils who build relationships outside school with peers and develop their social skills. Highly personalised pictorial activity planner's help pupils remember what they have chosen each week and give a clear time line of events. This helps pupils know the evening routine and minimises disagreements about issues like allocated computer time.

The residential staff shop and prepare food in the evening. Residential pupils help with shopping and enjoy trips to the local supermarket. This helps them learn about budgeting and healthy food choices. Food cooked is fresh and appetising. Pupils enjoy balanced meals around the dining table. Fresh fruit and vegetables are abundant. The house is welcoming and comfortable promoting a homely feel. Individual bedrooms are highly personalised by residential pupils. Residential pupils have individual choice in the décor of the rooms and bring in many items from home. This helps them know that staff value and respect their personal choices.

Pupils are supported to use the phone to make private calls to families and carers. Telephone numbers for external professionals are also programmed into the house mobile phone so that pupils may make calls to agencies such as Childline and Ofsted. Staff are highly proactive in the involvement of parents and families. Pupils' birthday celebrations and annual events and parties are extended to families. This helps pupils know that their families are accepted and valued within the residential setting. Staff communicate well with parents and carers to keep them updated about their child's progress and any concerns are shared in a timely manner. Parents are very positive about how this works, saying staff are 'really easy to communicate with and they tell me exactly how it is' and they are 'good communicators. I can find no fault with any of staff, they are brilliant and always let you know'.

## **Residential pupils' safety**

The safety of the residential pupils is good. Pupil's safety is paramount across the whole school and takes into account pupil's characteristics to ensure their safety and security. The school site is enclosed and appropriately secure. Gates are electronically monitored by reception and the perimeters of the grounds are securely fenced. Houses are locked and all visitors are monitored and chaperoned. This ensures pupils are secure, although on occasion older pupils do leave the site without permission. This triggers a set procedure to ensure their safe return and this is clearly reported on. However, the written protocol has not been finally agreed with the local police. Residential pupils practise road safety while going out in the community, teaching them about the dangers of traffic and how to keep themselves safe.

Residential pupils participate in a range of activities that present individual challenge in terms of physical ability and appropriate behaviour. Staff assess risk well by identifying protective factors linked to the individual vulnerabilities of pupils. This provides clear protocols for outings such as cycling and swimming enabling pupils to take part safely. There are positive behaviour management strategies which keep the use of physical restraint to a minimum. Staff work as a team to implement individual management plans for each pupil's behaviour. They communicate well to promote a consistent and unified approach between school and residence. Staff do use restraint when situations meet a clear safety criteria and these are reported on and reflected on well. Sanctions are meaningful and designed to help pupils take responsibility for their actions. However, the sanction record is at times unclear about the chronology of events making it difficult to monitor. Overall, pupils are given behavioural support that is tailored to their individual needs and keeps them and other pupils safe.

Residential pupils feel safe, there is a relaxed family atmosphere and pupils report that their belongings are safe. The dynamics within the group are good. There are minor disagreements, however, pupils have started to show acceptance of one another's differences. This promotes a calm house in which pupils are comfortable with one another.

The residential pupils' welfare is supported by effective safeguarding procedures that are understood by staff. Information is displayed around the school and residence stating clearly 'what to do' in the event of safeguarding concerns and naming staff with key roles. This high profile has resulted in a good overall awareness of the safeguarding procedures amongst staff. All staff are trained annually in safeguarding and understand their responsibility in the instigation of the procedures to safeguard pupils' welfare.

There are robust systems for recruiting staff which are clearly evidenced in individual files. These demonstrate that pupils are cared for by safe adults who are suitably experienced and carefully monitored throughout their employment.

## **Leadership and management of the residential provision**

The leadership and management of the residential provision are good. The aims and objectives of the residential provision are translated well into good practice and this is integrated within the school. The residence is managed with energy and efficiency by the head of care and supported by the school senior management team. This has resulted in a provision that is safe and well organised with clear procedures for staff to follow.

The staff team have evolved with the opening of the residential houses. Following some initial changes to the team this has resulted in a committed and motivated staff team. The overall provision is carefully monitored internally and externally to assess the impact on pupils and their families.

The head of care and staff team share an ambitious vision to improve and develop the provision in line with the needs of pupils. Staff recognise the diverse needs of pupils and plan well for them. This enables each pupil to develop in relation to their individual starting points. Overall, the impact on pupils is good; the care is highly personalised and responsive to individual requirements.

There have been no complaints about the provision. A clear procedure is available which empowers residential pupils to communicate in ways that are appropriate and meaningful to them. Pupils' views are actively sought and used to make changes to the provision. Parents are highly complimentary about the residential provision. Quotes from parents included: staff are 'fantastic no problems'; 'good at communicating'; and 'staff are flexible and fully meet his individual needs'.

The induction procedures for staff are good and link to the requirements. Staff are given a wide range of mandatory training and specific training to equip them for the role. The majority of staff have obtained a Level 3 qualification. However, not all staff have which means they have not yet demonstrated a recognised level of professional competence in working with children.

## **National minimum standards**

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

- The school's procedures are compatible with the local Runaway and Missing from Home and Care (RMFHC) protocols and procedures applicable to the area where the school is located. Where children placed out of authority go missing, the Head of Care follows the local RMFHC protocol and complies with and makes staff aware of any other processes required by the placing authority. (NMS 15.7)
- All existing care staff have attained a relevant minimum level 3 qualification (as referenced in 'Residential Special Schools National Minimum Standards') or have qualifications which demonstrate the same competencies. All new staff engaged from the commencement of these Standards hold these qualifications or begin working towards them within 3 months of confirmation of employment. (NMS 19.2)



## **What should the school do to improve further?**

- review individual behaviour management plans to ensure that details and guidance provided encompass both the school and residential environment
- ensure that the reporting of sanctions is clear in particular that each event is reported on separately and the details of the behaviour leading up to the sanction are in chronological order.

**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.**



11/07/2012

### **Inspection of Gretton School**

I recently visited your school to carry out an inspection. I spent time with you in residence and spoke to some of you and the staff who look after you. Several of you also filled in our survey, as did your parents and this was helpful. The staff work hard to ensure you enjoy residence and help you develop your abilities and independence. There are activities both in the houses and the local community that you regularly take part in and enjoy.

Overall, the residential staff look after you well, and the food is varied and healthy. The staff take care of your health needs and ensure you have everything you need.

There are some small areas that we have asked the staff to address these are in relation to qualifications and written procedures and do not impact on the good care you receive.

Yours sincerely,

Deirdra Keating