

Royal School for the Deaf Derby

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

The Royal School for the Deaf Derby is a non-maintained residential special school. There are 141 pupils on roll, whose ages range from 3 to 19. The vast majority of pupils are of white British heritage with some pupils from ethnic minority groups. All pupils have statements of special educational need for hearing impairment and some have complex special needs.

The residential service operates from Monday to Thursday and 48 pupils reside at the school during the week. The residential accommodation is provided across five residential facilities ranging from family style houses to purpose built blocks. The school is a signing and speaking community where the languages and cultures of both deaf and hearing people are valued.

The school is situated in the city of Derby. The residential provision was last inspected May 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	outstanding
Residential pupils' safety	outstanding
Leadership and management of the residential provision	outstanding

Overall effectiveness

The key findings of the residential inspection are as follows.

- This service is judged outstanding overall with outstanding judgements across all areas of the service. All national minimum standards are met. There are an exceptional number of strengths throughout the service. This results in outstanding progress and outcomes for residential pupils.
- Residential pupils have an extremely positive view of themselves and their school community. Pupils say staff are 'superb'. Professionals say 'Residential pupils have a very strong sense of identity, confidence and belonging in the school' and 'The residential service is like having an adopted family'.
- Residential pupils greatly value their relationships with staff and hold staff in high esteem. Professionals are extremely positive about staff saying 'They make excellent role models for deaf children'.
- Residential pupils' safety is at the very heart of the school and the school is proactive in implementing and sustaining excellent practice. This outstanding practice in safeguarding and child protection, makes the school stand out from others, and is worthy of wider dissemination. Safeguarding professionals say they cannot fault the school and that staff contribute greatly in working together in partnership to protect deaf young people.
- Residential pupils enjoy outstanding outcomes as a result of being able to express themselves using a combination of communication processes. They are empowered to express their views, extend their friendships and access a variety of opportunities in the community.
- The excellent focus on communication improves the quality of residential pupils' lives. Some pupils develop a greater understanding of how to use communication

equipment, use sign language and develop verbal skills. These improvements increase their social skills. Residential pupils have strong identities which positively impact on their transitions into adult life.

- Residential pupils develop confidence and have strong identities because staff have excellent insight into the diverse backgrounds of young people and their families. A proactive and sensitive approach ensures all residential pupils have the opportunity to achieve their maximum potential while staying at the service.
- The school has an accurate and insightful evaluation of its performance. Staff have a comprehensive programme of professional development. Leaders and managers are up to date with all developments in legislation and practice. There is a constant drive for improvement. Forward planning is detailed and thorough, including targets which are achievable and sustained.

Outcomes for residential pupils

Outcomes for residential pupils are outstanding. They thrive and develop in a vibrant, nurturing and enabling environment. Residential pupils are recognised and valued as young people with diverse individual needs. Their individuality is explored, respected and celebrated.

The residential experience enables and encourages pupils to benefit from meaningful, secure and stable relationships with staff and other pupils. There are exceptional levels of tolerance, care and consideration among the pupils. This is a credit to and a key outcome for the young people who stay at the residential service.

Residential pupils make exceptional progress because they are provided with pragmatic, creative and individually tailored communication strategies. They are more self-assured because they can give meaning to and communicate about their daily care, education and experiences. Staff work exhaustively to ensure all young people of all abilities and backgrounds can express themselves.

Residential pupils feel empowered and have a strong sense of identity; individually, among their peers and within the school community. They are keen to have a say about their care, future plans and the running of the service.

Residential pupils grow in confidence and enthusiastically embrace new opportunities, learn new skills and grow in independence. They develop confidence and self-worth and enthusiastically try new and embrace a wide range of activities. They particularly enjoy tobogganing, wheelchair basketball, going to youth club and a variety of trips into the local community.

The breadth of achievement and progress significantly impacts on pupils preparing for their future and reaching their potential. Residential pupils proudly and skilfully demonstrated their knowledge and skills during this inspection. They carried out

tours of the accommodation, explained about health and safety and encouraged visitors to be involved in the activities they enjoy.

Residential pupils say staying at the school helps with their education. They enjoy learning and value the support they receive with homework. All pupils enjoy attending the school and feel their progress significantly contributes to attending colleges in the local community and plans for higher education and employment. Some residential pupils have successfully moved on to further education placements. Other residential pupils achieve excellently in more vocational courses. All residential pupils improve and progress. They value the praise, reward and celebration that is consistently provided by all staff at the school.

Residential pupils' health is significantly improved and they have a growing awareness of their own health and medical needs. They routinely take part in essential health regimes such as physiotherapy and taking their own medication as a result of staying at the service. Keeping fit and healthy is one of the pupils' favourite aspects of the residential experience. They are enthusiastic and active participants in choosing healthy meals and taking part in sport, physical activities and a range of personal interests.

Residential pupils have a better quality of life as a result of attending the school. Parents' comments include, '(named pupil) really enjoys staying at school and always has lots of fun' and '(named pupil) has made really big progress.' Professionals are very complementary and identify residential pupils as having high levels of confidence and self-esteem as a result of staying at the residential service.

Quality of residential provision and care

The quality of the residential provision is outstanding. The service provides an energetic yet nurturing environment to promote pupils' educational and social development.

The residential accommodation is of a good standard, safe and very well maintained. Residential pupils can relax and feel warm and comfortable. Resources for residential pupils to play and spend leisure time are extensive. The accommodation and facilities support strongly residential pupils' learning and personal development.

Residential pupils excel and thrive as a result of the effective links between the residential and education staff. All staff place the pupils' welfare and potential at the centre of their practice. Staff consistently implement an effective framework for care, education and behaviour management. Staff say 'We all work as a team and we are all so very proud of the young people'.

Residential pupils extend and develop their personal identities, confidence and social skills. Staff are enthusiastic and innovative in providing a range of activities. The staffs' outward-looking approach means residential pupils are constantly trying new

and enjoyable challenges and opportunities. Staff and residential pupils have good external links; ensuring residential pupils extend their experiences in the community.

Staff have an excellent understanding of the socio-economic and diverse backgrounds of the pupils using the residential service. The care framework includes tailor made packages and strategies to promote the inclusion of pupils and families. Young people are fully supported and enabled to aspire to their potential because care and expectations reflect the individuality and diversity of each young person. An outstanding strength of the care framework is the pragmatic approach and emphasis on inclusive communication processes.

Pupils settle and do well in the residential service as a result of the effective transition and induction process. Staff ensure parents have appropriate and meaningful information about the service. They liaise closely with social workers and placing authorities to ensure pupils, parents and carers are meaningfully involved and consulted. Parents, carers and pupils understand and value the service because staff are approachable and helpful.

Staff provide a strong focus on confidence and responsibility to help residential pupils grow in maturity and move towards more independent living. They are encouraged to develop practical skills such as cooking, cleaning and budgeting. Parents are very positive that the residential experience helps young people to be more independent.

Care plans have a highly beneficial impact on outcomes for residential pupils because they are focused, detailed and systematically implemented. Targets and strategies are intrinsically linked between residential, education, home and where relevant other supporting agencies. There is a strong ethos of placing residential pupils and parents at the centre of the service. Residential pupils and parents are positively enabled and encouraged to attend and contribute to review meetings. The involvement of all individuals central to the young person maximises the impact on each residential pupil's progress.

The safe and effective management of medication significantly impacts on residential pupils' health and well-being. The school nurse and residential staff work together to enable residential pupils to engage in their health and medical care. The staff are innovative and pragmatic. Tailor made health care strategies enable residential pupils to participate in and develop awareness of their health needs and routines.

Residential pupils enjoy the food because they are given choice and educated about healthy eating. They are provided with varied, balanced and nutritious meals. The school catering arrangements are excellently managed. The catering staff are pragmatic and responsive to the needs and preferences of the pupils. Menus and meals reflect the religious, cultural and health needs of all pupils.

Parents and professional comments about the quality of care and staff include, 'The

residential community is an inclusive environment', 'Independence is fostered in all young people' and 'The staff are excellent in supporting pupils and families'.

Residential pupils' safety

The safety of residential pupils is outstanding. Residential pupils are protected by excellently planned and effectively implemented safeguarding arrangements. There are robust staff recruitment procedures and young people are kept safe by staff who are well trained in safeguarding children, first aid, behaviour management and health and safety.

Residential pupils' welfare and well-being is promoted because safeguarding is at the heart of the service. Residential pupils say they are safe and they present as very secure in the residential setting. They are protected from bullying because staff are vigilant and also proactive in talking to pupils about relationships. There is a clear and robust culture of anti-bullying and high expectations regarding tolerance and respect for others.

Parents and professionals are unanimous and confident that the service keeps children safe. There are clear and accountable processes for recognising and responding to concerns. Staff clearly grasp the importance of the finer detail and how concerns must be reported as these could contribute to a much larger safeguarding matter.

Managers, leaders and staff maintain excellent working relationships with all safeguarding agencies and support networks. A key strength of the service is how staff and supporting agencies understand the complexities of young people's disabilities, behaviours and communication processes. There are clear protocols and procedures in place. Young people who go missing and place themselves at potential risk are much safer because staff have effectively implemented protocols and cross-agency working.

Clear boundaries and expectations ensure residential pupils thrive and grow in confidence. Residential pupils experience exceptional improvement in their behaviour and relationships with others. This is as a result of staff understanding young people's presenting behaviour in terms of communication and understanding of learning disabilities and sensory challenges. Residential pupils benefit because staff are patient, committed and proactive. They consistently explore ways to encourage positive behaviour, engaging pupils in these processes and valuing the progress pupils make.

The use of physical intervention or sanctions is rare due to the excellent early interventions and de-escalation strategies used by staff.

Risk assessment and management is excellently managed. Concerns and challenges are clearly identified. Strategies to manage these concerns focus on safety but also

ensure all young people have opportunities to reach their potential and achieve.

Residential pupils are cared for in a safe environment. Health and safety is effectively managed. Excellent checking and monitoring systems are in place to promote safety. Security is thorough and well monitored. Residential pupils know what to do should there be a fire. They also have a meaningful and practical understanding about keeping themselves safe, both in school and in the community.

Leadership and management of the residential provision

The leadership and management of the residential provision is outstanding. The service benefits from managers who are knowledgeable and motivated.. Residential pupils are excellently cared for and this is reinforced by parents and professionals with comments about the service such as 'excellent', 'superb' and 'great'.

The service is effectively staffed. Well-trained and experienced staff value each other, their team's diversity and the leadership of the management team. Parents and professionals see the staff team as integral to the outstanding quality of care and outcomes for the residential pupils. Comments about staff include 'Superb, extremely amenable' and 'Staff are very dedicated'.

The dedication, enthusiasm and energy of the staff team permeates throughout and across all levels of the school. The chair of governors says 'I am passionate about the school', the Principal identifies the school's focus as a 'celebration of the holistic child, not just academic but all achievements' and the catering staff comments include 'We are a family orientated school'.

The strong emphasis on maintaining meaningful and respectful relationships between staff, residential pupils and families is an exceptional feature. This results in high levels of self-esteem and a sense of achievement for pupils, staff and meaningful engagement with families and carers. Parents say 'Communication is brilliant' and 'I can talk to the head of care or the principal anytime'.

There is excellent commitment and a strong child-centred focus to all practice. The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. The school's culture of respect and individuality permeates throughout the staff team. There is an ethos that anyone, young people and staff, are able to achieve anything.

The leaders, managers and staff place the views and communication of pupils at the centre of the service. The views and ideas of residential pupils are actively sought and valued. Pupils feel that they can make a difference. For example older pupils now wear blazers, there have been additions to the menu and pupils have made a significant contribution to improving the outdoor play area.

Parents are fully confident about the approachability of the staff and raising concerns. Residential pupils have good access to meaningful information about what

they should do if they are not happy or dissatisfied. The leaders and managers are very quick to respond to any complaints raised by pupils and parents. Within the positive nature of this school, the complaints process is seen as a process of quality assurance to see what may need improvement and attention.

The school's Statement of Purpose is comprehensive and staff practice is embedded within a strong framework for care and pupils' safety. These excellent standards are maintained due to robust and regular monitoring systems. Self-evaluation is a clear strength, used to build on progress and strategically work on other areas of the service. Reports are routinely submitted to the board of governors, who are themselves proactive and involved in the development of the school and residential service. Residential pupils benefit from the strong ethos and drive for improvement.

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.



07/12/2012

To all the residential pupils at the Royal School for the Deaf Derby

Inspection of Royal School for the Deaf Derby

Thank you for making me welcome and helping me with the inspection. I am writing to let you know the residential provision at Royal School for the Deaf Derby has been judged to be outstanding.

Everything about the residential service is outstanding and I can see why. You really enjoy your stay at the service. You learn well, improve behaviour and learn how to be more independent. The staff keep you very safe. You all develop into very confident young people and have great independence skills.

You, your parents and people who come to visit the school told Ofsted that the residential service is excellent and helps you do even better in your education and grow in confidence.

I was very impressed by your progress and the brilliant relationships you have with staff. You also make great friendships with the other pupils and treat each other really well. There is a strong sense of community in your school, you have high levels of ambition because there are excellent role models.

You all clearly enjoy a good range of activities. Everyone has a chance to do their favourite thing and you are really enthusiastic about trying new things.

Your views are very important to the staff. They make sure you can have your say about the residential units and your plans for the future.

You say you feel safe and do not worry about bullying. It was great to see you all so happy at the residential service.

Yours sincerely

Elaine Cray

Yours sincerely,

Elaine Cray