

Exeter Royal Academy for Deaf Education

Exeter Royal Academy for Deaf Education, 50 Topsham Road, EXETER, EX2 4NF

Inspection dates	28/02/2013	
Overall effectiveness	Good	2
Outcomes for residential pupils	Good	2
Quality of residential provision and care	Good	2
Residential pupils' safety	Good	2
Leadership and management of the residential provision	Good	2

Summary of key findings

The residential provision is good because

- The safety of residential pupils is given the highest priority. All staff are trained in safe working practices and implement these in practice. Behaviour is extremely well managed with little use of sanctions and physical restraint within the residential setting. There are few incidents of pupils going missing and none that require reporting to the police. Bullying is well managed through high staffing levels and supervision of pupils.
- Residential pupils are well cared for by a staff team that is knowledgeable, confident and competent in its role. A well co-ordinated programme of internal and professional training equips staff with the skills to fulfil their role and meet the needs of residential pupils.
- Residential pupils benefit and progress through the strong attachments they have with staff and the opportunities provided. There is a strong focus on meeting individual needs and care delivery is highly personalised.
- The school's residential provision is extremely well organised and managed. There is a strong commitment to improvement. The school has met all the suggestions that were made following the last inspection as to how practice could be improved further. Some progress has also been made in addressing the equality and diversity issues particularly in respect of promoting the cultural identity of some pupils. There are a few areas where suggestions have been made about how practice can be further improved.

Compliance with the national minimum standards for residential special schools

The school meets the national minimum standards for residential special schools

Information about this inspection

The inspection took place with five hours notice given to the school. The inspection activities included meetings with: pupils; some of the residential care staff; the head teacher; teaching staff; ancillary staff and other professionals associated with the school, such as the speech and language therapist. The inspection also included a tour of the premises and observations of meal-times, activities and residential routines. Information was gathered from the school's records, policies and self-evaluation.

Inspection team

Barbara Davies

Lead social care inspector

Pippa Greed

Social care inspector

Full report

Information about this school

Exeter Royal Academy for Deaf Education is a non-maintained, residential special school and college operating from one site. The academy is divided into two areas, college and school. The school site provides residential accommodation and education for pre-school, primary school and secondary school children between the ages of 4 and 16. The college provides residential accommodation, further education and vocational courses for 75 students between the ages of 16 and 24 years. In total there are 30 residential pupils under the age of 18 years. 20 of these reside in the school residence and 10 in the college residence. Residential pupils board for five days, seven days or part-time. The last social care inspection took place on 13th October 2011 when the school was judged to provide a good standard of care.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Collate all the information on safeguarding into one procedure.
- Increase the opportunities for residential pupils to express their views about the residential setting.
- Formalise the induction procedures for residential pupils.
- Provide a male from whom older residential pupils in the college residence can seek personal and sexual health support and advice.
- Provide a water fountain in the residence.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for residential pupils

Good

Through their participation in the activity programme, residential students gain in confidence, develop a tolerance of each other and acquire practical skills, such as shopping and cooking. Through the support they receive from residential staff, teachers and a range of specialists, residential pupils overcome personal difficulties and develop emotional resilience. They learn how to manage their hearing difficulty and not to let this be an inhibiting factor. With support from staff, residential pupils are supported to take risks appropriate to their age and understanding and in line with those of their peers. As a result, they are well prepared for further education and adult life. Residential pupils increase in maturity and confidence as they move through the school. This is particularly evident when they make the transition from the school residence to the college residence.

Residential pupils are aware of the need to keep themselves fit and healthy and are enthusiastic participants in activities, such as the gym, trampolining and swimming. Those pupils with specific health needs are supported to understand and manage these themselves. This prepares residential pupils well for adulthood and develops independence rather than reliance. Residential pupils feel well cared and value the school nurse as a valuable source of advice and support. Older boys, however, do not feel comfortable in seeking sexual health advice from a female and a male member of staff has not been identified to fulfil this role. Residential pupils are better informed about risks posed to health as a result of advice and education delivered by the school nurse, such as how to check for breast and testicular cancer.

Quality of residential provision and care

Good

The needs of residential pupils are extremely well catered for by a staff team who understand their needs and are attentive to meeting them. High staffing ratios and effective delegation of responsibilities ensure that both individual and group needs are met.

Although there is not a written induction procedure for pupils, in practice they receive a thorough introduction to the residential setting. Introductory visits familiarise them with routines and expectations. A key worker supports them through the process and a fellow residential pupil acts as a 'buddy.' The transition from school to college commences early and this helps young people understand the levels of independence expected and provides a seamless transition. The success of the induction arrangements is demonstrated by how quickly residential pupils settle in and become comfortable in their surroundings. Two pupils who had recently commenced school: 'We were scared when we came and missed our mum but now we love it. It is much better than where we were before.'

There are good and improving arrangements for attending to the health needs of residential pupils. Comprehensive information obtained as residential pupils are admitted to the school informs the planning of healthcare provision. Individual healthcare needs are well catered for with staff being training in any medical interventions required and special provision made for those with dietary requirements. On-site specialists, such as speech and language therapists and the school nurse, provide excellent levels of health support which contributes to the overall wellbeing of residential pupils. Arrangements for the recording and administration of medication are well-organised and safe and this is an area of improvement since the last inspection. Staff are better informed about safe procedures when administering controlled drugs because there is now a controlled drugs procedure.

Residential pupils benefit from a diverse range of good quality recreational facilities and resources that address the leisure needs of pupils with very different interests and capabilities. The extra-

curricular activity programme is varied and provides good opportunities for residential pupils to integrate within the local community, for instance, by going shopping and using the local swimming pool.

While the residential settings do not hold their own meetings, there are good opportunities through the school council and questionnaires for residential pupils to express their views and influence practice in the residential settings. For instance, following a request from some residential pupils, they were able to redecorate a sitting room in one of the houses. All areas of the residential provision are decorated and furnished to a good standard. It is to the school's credit that improvements continue to be made to the décor despite a proposed move to a new site in 2015. The environment is well-maintained and safe due to an on-going programme of refurbishment and regular safety checks.

Residential pupils' safety

Good

Safety arrangements and procedures within the school are very strong and some aspects of practice are outstanding. Recruitment procedures are robust and exceed standards by, for instance, providing an photograph of the applicant to referees as an additional means of verifying identity. The consistent application of these procedures safeguards against young people having contact with unsuitable adults.

A strong safeguarding ethos runs through the school. There is a strong commitment to child protection with all staff completing safeguarding training at a level that is commensurate to their role. Although training and information provided to staff is comprehensive and complete, it is not currently collated into one procedure. Staff are however, fully conversant with the school's safeguarding procedures and are confident about reporting concerns. The LocalSafeguarding Children Board report that the school co-operates with any enquiries and detailed records provide a transparent and detailed account of action taken.

The school's anti-bullying policy is consistently applied in practice. There are occasions, such as in the dining hall, when young people are fractious with each other. Some problems have also been experienced in school as a result of incidents of cyber-bullying outside of the school setting. The potential for these matters to escalate is effectively addressed by the vigilance of staff; there is a visible staff presence at key times and early staff intervention should problems arise. Staff have received training in anti-bullying and this informs their practice.

Behaviour is managed extremely well within the residential setting by staff who are calm, confident and reassuring in their approach to residential pupils. Staff help young people to make constructive use of their leisure time and individual support is provided for those who need it. These strategies are highly effective and there are few incidents that result in the use of sanctions or physical restraint. Staff are however trained in safe techniques should the use of physical restraint be necessary. Incidents of young people going missing are few and of a short duration. There have been no incidents where it has been necessary to inform the police.

A safe environment is provided and health and safety responsibilities are diligently executed. Regular servicing and checks of all fire, mechanical, electrical and gas appliances ensure they remain safe and in working order. Residential pupils are familiar with the evacuation procedures because they take part in extremely regular fire drills. Fire warning systems within the school and the residential provision have been adapted to take into account the particular needs of young people. Young people are further protected by staff knowledge of young people's personal evacuation plans.

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

The management of the residential provision is central to the running of the whole school. The aims of boarding are clearly stated for both parents and children and are understood by residential staff. Residential routines are well-established and run smoothly. The school is effectively able to monitor the effectiveness through a range of self-evaluation processes. These include reports of visits undertaken by a parent governor and quality assurance surveys sent to parents and the monitoring of incidents. The current system for monitoring is effective in informing managers of patterns and trends and action is taken in response to any issues noted. The school intends to use a new electronic system to monitor trends and patterns in incidents, however no analysis has yet taken place using this system.

Feedback from parents and residential pupils show high levels of satisfaction with the residential setting. Pupils did comment that they would like a water fountain in the school residence to avoid the need to go downstairs and residential pupils in college residence said they would like to be able to talk to any member of staff just not their designated keyworker. The school's practice is clear that residential pupils may approach any member of staff with a concern apart from the occasional exception for reasons of confidentiality.

A well-established programme of internal and professional training equips staff with the skills and competencies to meet the needs of young people. Staff are well supported through regular, relevant and up-to-date training, regular supervision, annual appraisals and staff meetings. As a result, they are confident and settled in their roles. Residential pupils benefit from being cared for by such a stable and settled workforce. Contingency arrangements in the event of unplanned staff absences, such as staff sickness, are effective and cause little disruption for residential pupils. Staff have an excellent understanding of the importance of maintaining accurate and comprehensive records and are familiar with the full range of required policies and procedures and confidently implement them.

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	A school which provides an exceptional quality of care and significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 2	Good	A school which provides a high quality of care that exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 3	Adequate	A school which meets minimum requirements but needs to improve the quality of care it provides.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A school where minimum requirements are not met and the quality of care has serious weaknesses.

School details

Unique reference number	113654
Social care unique reference number	SC022216
DfE registration number	878/7083

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.

Type of school	Residential Special School
Number of boarders on roll	30
Gender of boarders	Mixed
Age range of boarders	7 to 18
Headteacher	Ms Ros Way
Date of previous boarding inspection	11/10/2011
Telephone number	01392 267 023

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