

Appleford School

Appleford School, Elston Lane, Shrewton, SALISBURY, SP3 4HL

Inspection dates	04/03/2013 to 06/03/2013	
Overall effectiveness	Good	2
Outcomes for residential pupils	Outstanding	1
Quality of residential provision and care	Outstanding	1
Residential pupils' safety	Good	2
Leadership and management of the residential provision	Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings

The residential provision is good because

- The overall effectiveness of the residential provision is good. The school benefits from strong and effective leadership where all staff are suitably qualified and provide an excellent standard of care.
- Residential pupils make significant progress socially, emotionally and educationally and are supported to achieve independent living skills and to enhance their self-esteem. This is achieved through the excellent relationships established between staff and residential pupils.
- The school provides a structured and stimulating environment, providing residential pupils with an excellent range of enjoyable extra-curricular leisure activities, both within the school and in the wider community.
- The school supports residential pupils to maintain good levels of behaviour through praise, encouragement and reinforcement of clear boundaries. The school also actively promotes and rewards positive behaviour of residential pupils.
- The safety and well-being of the residential pupils is paramount and robust practices are maintained for their safety. Residential pupils enjoy their overall experience of living in the residential provision and feel safe within their environment.

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

Inspection team

Thomas Webber

Lead social care inspector

Full report

Information about this school

Appleford School is an independent, co-educational residential special school for children aged from 7 to 16 years of age, who have dyslexia and associated learning difficulties. The school has a Christian character and close links with its local church. The school is inclusive of children of other faiths. Pupils may be referred from local authorities or private sources.

The school offers the options of full boarding, weekly or flexible boarding and day provision. The residential provision currently comprises of two boarding houses which are located on the school site. They provide separate accommodation for boys and girls. The school is located on the edge of Salisbury Plain in the village of Shrewton, Wiltshire.

The school can accommodate a maximum of 54 residential pupils. At the time of this inspection there were 65 pupils on roll: 38 residential pupils and 27 day pupils, three of which are receiving flexible boarding. The residential provision was last inspected on 19 March 2012.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- consideration should be given to further enhancing the placement plans of residential pupils to reflect how their day to day care and support is met.
- consideration should be given to further enhancing the bedroom areas of residential pupils within the dormitories by creating private individual spaces with the use of furniture or partitions.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for residential pupils

Outstanding

Outcomes for residential pupils are outstanding. Residential pupils enjoy their overall experience of living in the residential provision of the school and spoke very positively about this. The positive experience helps them to learn and develop new social skills as well as to grow in confidence and develop their self-esteem. They continue to receive care and support from a stable staff team who ensure they receive continuity of care. Strong and very positive relationships are established between residential pupils and staff. Residential pupils are comfortable and at ease in their environment and within the company of staff.

Residential pupils live in a structured and stimulating environment where they are able to engage in a broad range of activities which appeal to a wide range of ages and abilities. A number of residential pupils attend the local Scouts and Guides organisations as well as the local youth club. These opportunities assist them to make friendships outside of the school and spend time with their peers. Many of the activities help them to adopt a healthy and active lifestyle.

Quality of residential provision and care

Outstanding

The quality of pastoral care and support residential pupils receive is outstanding. There are excellent pastoral arrangements and resources in place which fully support and contribute to the progress residential pupils achieve. Residential staff are highly motivated and committed to ensuring that residential pupils' individualised care and support is delivered sensitively to meet their specific needs. The collaborative working arrangements between academic and residential staff and the therapy team ensure that all matters relating to residential pupils are effectively communicated. This ensures that residential pupils receive continuity and consistency of care.

The school provides prospective residential pupils and their parents with good information about the level of care, support and services residential pupils can expect to receive. The induction programme for new residential pupils ensures that they receive the level of support which helps them settle in successfully. In addition, where a few residential pupils have been inappropriately placed, the school has also fully supported them to make a successful transition to a more appropriate provision.

All residential pupils are provided with a social independence plan which primarily reflects their daily living skills and what they can or cannot do. In addition, an annual review and twice yearly reports are also produced. Although collectively these documents provide informative information, they do not reflect how residential pupils are cared for on a daily basis. Although this does not significantly impact on the excellent daily care residential pupils receive, the school devised a new format during the inspection to address this shortfall. The care planning arrangements for residential pupils are well embedded in practice. This ensures that all residential pupils are provided with the opportunity, to varying degrees, to contribute to their annual review process.

The school provides residential pupils with an excellent range of enjoyable extra-curricular leisure activities, both within the school and in the wider community. They are fully consulted about what activities they wish to participate in. The particular talents and interests of residential pupils are fully recognised and promoted. Furthermore, there are opportunities within the school's structure to develop their leadership and inter-personal skills.

The school maintains excellent healthcare arrangements which promote the health and well-being of residential pupils. 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. The internal therapy team also significantly contribute to the welfare of residential pupils through the individual support provided to them. This assists residential pupils to develop their self-esteem as well as dealing with any specific emotional and behaviour issues. Staff are vigilant in monitoring and making sure that residential pupils, who feel unwell, are well looked after. Suitable facilities and effective procedures are established in this area of practice. The administration of medication is robust and medicines are securely stored, ensuring residential pupils are kept safe.

The school ensures that residential pupils receive a healthy, varied and nutritious diet which they can enjoy. Their cultural and special diets are also well catered for. The feedback from residential pupils is regularly sought, which positively influences the menus produced. They are encouraged to try new foods from a variety of cultures in order to develop a wider appreciation of different foods. Residential pupils are able to access drinks and snacks and a selection of fresh fruit is readily available on a daily basis. Mealtimes are conducted in a relaxed and congenial setting, where open discussion is fully encouraged. Good table manners are actively promoted and reinforced. Residential pupils are happy with the choice, quality and quantity of food provided.

Residential pupils are currently accommodated in one of two boarding houses, based on gender. These are maintained to a good standard, being clean, tidy and comfortable. Attention has been given to providing residential pupils with homely environments. The school maintains a rolling programme of refurbishment and redecoration to improve the overall standard of accommodation. The houses provide residential pupils with suitable communal space, together with bathing and toilet facilities, to meet their individual and collective needs. Residential pupils are accommodated in various sized dormitories, but are given the opportunity to personalise their individual bedroom spaces. The school continues to make improvements to the accommodation to enhance the living environment within the constraints of the buildings.

Strong communication and close working arrangements are well established between residential staff and parents. These ensure that parents are kept fully informed about their child's progress and well-being. Structured times are in place when parents can contact their sons and daughters and residential pupils can ring their parents. There is some flexibility about these arrangements.

Residential pupils' safety

Good

The safety of residential pupils is good. There have been no residential staff recruited since the last inspection. However, the previous inspection report identified that the school operates a safe recruitment process and rigorously ensures that only suitable persons are employed to work with residential pupils.

Incidents of residential pupils going absent without authority are extremely rare. There has only been one incident since the last inspection. Where residential pupils go missing, appropriate action is taken to return them at the earliest opportunity.

All incidents of bullying are dealt effectively and promptly. Residential pupils are aware that such behaviour is unacceptable and they trust staff to deal with any such incidents when they occur. Staff and residential pupils do not currently see bullying as an issue and any incidents are promptly dealt with.

The school supports residential pupils to maintain appropriate levels of behaviour through encouragement, praise and reinforcement of clear boundaries. The school also actively promotes and rewards positive behaviour of residential pupils; for example, by celebrating good behaviour and achievements through award ceremonies. Sanctions and restraints are also used when appropriate, although the latter are rarely used within the residential provision. Staff are trained in the use of physical intervention and de-escalation techniques, with appropriate records being

maintained when these methods of control are used.

The recording of rewards, sanctions, restraints and being absent without authority have all been reviewed and revised to ensure that robust recording systems are in place. These systems are intended to help monitor the behaviour of residential pupils more effectively.

The school makes excellent provision to fully safeguard residential pupils' welfare. Robust safeguarding policies and procedures are in place which are readily available to all staff. Staff have a very good understanding of how to safeguard residential pupils through regular and on-going training. The school maintains strong links with the Local Safeguarding Children Board, to ensure that any potential or safeguarding concerns are promptly and effectively referred. These practices ensure that residential pupils are protected from harm. The various fire and health and safety checks, tests and service arrangements are maintained to an excellent standard to ensure that staff and residential pupils live in a safe environment.

Leadership and management of the residential provision Outstanding

The leadership and management of the residential provision is good. The headmaster is supported by a committed management team. His direct leadership provides a robust oversight and a clear vision for the future of the school as a whole. The residential provision is an integral component of life at the school and staff continually strive to make improvements to enhance the care and welfare provided to residential pupils. This also extends to the wider community, where the headmaster's leadership has strengthened the links between the school and community so that the school is seen as an integral component of the wider environment. The school has taken appropriate action to address the various recommendations and areas of further improvement made at the previous Ofsted inspection.

The head of boarding is suitably qualified and experienced and effectively leads the residential staff team. The staff are highly committed to providing the best level of care and personal support to residential pupils. An open door policy is well established within the school with staff feeling valued and extremely well supported. All staff are provided with regular, formal supervision and annual appraisals are also well established. These practices ensure that the on-going performance of staff is regularly monitored. Effective systems are well established within the school to ensure excellent communication is maintained between the residential, teaching and therapy teams. Regular meetings ensure that staff keep up to date with regard to all issues pertaining to the school and residential pupils. These also promote continuity and consistency of care. The school also maintains effective communication with residential pupils' parents.

The school maintains sufficient numbers of staff on duty to meet the individual and collective needs of residential pupils. Residential pupils are cared for by a staff team who are trained and competent to meet their needs. New staff are provided with a thorough induction programme, in line with the Children's Workforce Development Council's standards. Staff are supported and encouraged to update their knowledge, skill and expertise by attending a range of training courses. Residential staff spoke very positively about training opportunities available to them.

The last inspection report refers to an effective system for managing all complaints. Residential pupils and their parents are provided with appropriate information on how to complain. Residential pupils confirmed that they know how to complain and that there are always sufficient staff available who they feel comfortable talking to about any concerns or worries they may have. There have been no complaints received since the last inspection. However, there is no effective recording system to monitor any concerns raised by residential pupils. As a result, a system for monitoring and the recording of concerns was established during the inspection.

Effective external and internal monitoring arrangements are maintained which oversee the care

and services provided. The reports produced identify shortfalls where they occur as well as assisting in the improvement of care and services provided to residential pupils.

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	126535
Social care unique reference number	SC039141
DfE registration number	865/6008

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	
Number of boarders on roll	41
Gender of boarders	Mixed
Age range of boarders	7 to 16
Headteacher	Mr David King
Date of previous boarding inspection	15/03/2012
Telephone number	01980 621020
Email address	secretary@appleford.wilts.sch.uk

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