

# Mary Hare School for the Deaf

Mary Hare School, Arlington Manor, Snelsmore Common, NEWBURY, Berkshire, RG14 3BQ

**Inspection dates** 05/03/2013 to 07/03/2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Adequate</b>	<b>3</b>
Outcomes for residential pupils	Good	2
Quality of residential provision and care	Good	2
Residential pupils' safety	Adequate	3
Leadership and management of the residential provision	Adequate	3

## Summary of key findings

### The residential provision is adequate because

- Residential pupils make good progress in developing their independent living skills using support provided by staff. Good attention is paid to equality and diversity providing pupils with opportunities to explore a range of cultural backgrounds.
- There are shortfalls in the area of monitoring systems and staff training. These relate to pupil's medication records and training provision respectively.
- The management of safeguarding, which incorporates all forms of bullying, child protection and understanding relationships, is well managed. Pupils feel safe in the school and supported by staff that are well trained and vigilant in child protection.
- Feedback from residential pupils and their families confirms that they feel the school provides a very positive experience for pupils and that they feel valued, consulted and safe.
- There are shortfalls in the area of fire safety. The reliance on the good practice, vigilance and organisation of staff is insufficient thereby compromising the safety of pupils.

### Compliance with the national minimum standards for residential special schools

The school does not meet the national minimum standards for residential special schools. The details are listed in the full report.

## Information about this inspection

The school was given a morning's notice period on the day of inspection. An initial meeting was held with the headteacher, vice principal, care standards officer, and head of care. Discussions with care staff, and also catering, maintenance, medical, activities and special educational needs coordinator staff took place. All boarding houses were visited. Informal discussions took place with residential pupils in all houses, commons room and during meals. Residential pupils gave a tour of the accommodation at both sites. Risk assessments, care plans, recruitment records and policies and procedures were sampled. Pupils' surveys, parent discussion and Parent View surveys were also examined.

## Inspection team

Pippa Greed	Lead social care inspector
Anna Williams	Social care inspector

# Full report

## Information about this school

Mary Hare School is a non-maintained, mixed, special school near Newbury in Berkshire for pupils aged 5 to 19 with severe and profound hearing loss. The mixed ability primary centre is on a separate site and offers both day and weekly boarding placements. The senior school caters for children with the ability to follow a full national curriculum and who might expect to continue with their education after 16. Pupils from the primary school do not automatically progress to the secondary school. The secondary school admits pupils from all over the United Kingdom and has a small number of pupils from overseas. It offers both day and termly boarding placements. Nearly all pupils board.

The primary school currently has one boarding facility with both themed and more conventional bedrooms to suit the age profile of the school. The secondary school has five boarding houses. Year 7 has its own dedicated boarding house, Years 8 to 10 live in two larger boarding houses, Year 11 live in a purpose-built boarding house and the sixth form has separate accommodation of individual and shared study bedrooms.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- **The school must meet the following national minimum standards for residential special schools.**
  - Any treatment received by a child is recorded in a written or electronic school record (separate from NHS records) to which only appropriately designated staff have access. (NMS 3.9)
  - The school premises, accommodation and facilities provided therein are maintained to a standard such that, as far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of pupils are ensured. (NMS 6.2)
  - The school complies with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (as referenced in 'Residential Special Schools National Minimum Standards'). (NMS 7.1)
  - The records specified in Appendix 2 (Residential Special Schools National Minimum Standards) are maintained and monitored by the school and action taken as appropriate. (NMS 13.3)
  - All existing care staff have attained a relevant minimum level 3 qualification 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)

## Inspection judgements

### Outcomes for residential pupils

**Good**

Outcomes for residential pupils are good. Residential pupils make good progress to develop their independence as a result of the residential provision and the school's commitment towards transition. Residential pupils are proud of their achievements and appreciate praise and recognition. This further encourages them to rise to the challenge and grow in confidence.

Residential pupils continually improve their social skills and behaviour. This enables them to interact appropriately in the wider community. Residential pupils benefit from youth club facilities and opportunities to develop life skills. Activities examples include; kickboxing, football, archery, boxercise, swimming as well as in-house entertainment. Pupils enjoy community activities, such as Brownies or Cubs, trampolining, and running at a local park, all of which are met with excitement and enthusiasm. One parent commented, 'There are always lots of activities on offer, from baking cakes to washing cars. I was particularly impressed when my son explained that he was washing cars for fundraising purposes.'

Residential pupils have good relationships with staff. Pupils value the positive interaction and the opportunity to build relationships with each other that are equal and respectful. They confirm they enjoy their time in residential provision. Many pupils report that in contrast to previous school experience, they feel much happier mixing with similar peers. They live in a range of spacious, well-equipped houses suited to their differing needs while promoting socialisation and privacy.

Residential pupils' health needs are overall maintained. They are actively involved in maintaining good health and have an understanding of the need for regular medicines to keep them well. They are able to access support and advice in order to explore what growing up means to them. They make use of available information and have the confidence to seek advice from staff members.

Residential pupils develop aspirations for the future and participate in transition planning. This is as a result of the belief instilled in them that they can progress. One pupil chose to board, in order to be involved in residential activities, even though their family live locally. One parent commented, 'They get an allowance for being a waitress, and they love it. It teaches them communication with others, following 'work' rules and managing money, and they get a small allowance they can spend. They do it out of their own choice, and it has helped them make friends and build confidence when dealing with other people.'

### Quality of residential provision and care

**Good**

The quality of residential care is good. Prospective pupils' and parents' initial contact with the school is arranged through informal visits. Initial information and residential observation is undertaken by the management team in order to evaluate the suitability of the placement for potential pupils. When a placement is approved, the school focus on improving pupil's outcomes, nurture their development and raise their self-esteem. The care planning system demonstrates the school's commitment towards pupils' developmental targets. The school has been developing this further by ensuring that teaching and residential staff work together on a daily basis to provide a more seamless and cohesive way of working throughout the school and the residential environment.

Parent View feedback given at the time of this inspection shows high level of satisfaction from parents overall as either strongly agree or agree. For example, the vast majority of parents agreed with this statement; 'My child makes good progress at this school.'

The school promotes a range of vocational opportunities, to encourage pupils to increase their levels of independence. Examples include: work experience such as office work, working in a nursery, and also paid work waitressing in the youth club diner, local arts centre or nearby theme park. This means residential pupils benefit from developing life skills, which in turn increases their confidence. Pupils' comments include: 'I have learnt to be more independent here, with laundry, cooking and organising myself' and 'We sometimes have cultural days and we celebrate a festival like Chinese new year, or pancake day.'

The school nurse assists pupils to understand the importance of good health and personal care. Residential pupils are assessed to establish if they are able to manage any aspects of their medication. The administration of medication and the competency of staff is undertaken by the nurse. However, monitoring mechanisms are not robust. This relates to audit systems. Audit checks did not pick up gaps seen in medication administration records and the impacts on residential pupil's quality of health care.

Residential pupils enjoy a spacious, interesting environment that is decorated and designed to help them relax and feel comfortable. Pupils spoke positively of the new residential house, saying that the new building provides improved study space as well as space to relax in. Comments include: 'I really like Murray House, and being only with year 11 students, I am studying much better already as I am less distracted. I really like my room at Murray House, it's the first time I have had my own single room, I like the space and full privacy' and 'Care staff are brilliant, they have always helped me. Staff make sure everyone is okay.'

### **Residential pupils' safety**

### **Adequate**

The safety of residential pupils is adequate. This is due to the arrangements for ensuring the maintenance of fire safety and also health and safety. Some fire safety installation is in need of upgrading to ensure that they meet the legally required standard. The need for upgrading also relates to electrical wiring maintenance. Action points made by external professionals for longer-term remedial work have not yet been addressed.

The school has in place an effective system for evacuating residential pupils in the event of a fire. Residential staff maintain routine weekly fire system checks.

The management of safeguarding for residential pupils is robust. The designated senior person is well known to staff and pupils. Staff have received training in child protection. Concerns and observations are referred, indicating a good level of vigilance. The environment is appropriately secure with a range of surveillance strategies. The school's absence without authority procedure is appropriate and incidences of missing pupils are rare.

The school provides pastoral care through a range of staff representatives. The school operates an effective anti-bullying policy. Residential pupils spoken with confirm they experience little or no bullying. Pupils are encouraged to participate in different celebrations of other cultures. Displays around the school, youth club activities and school newsletter show a good range of cultural celebrations and festivals that are embraced. School and residential staff are acutely aware of those pupils who could be vulnerable to teasing and bullying by others. They address this by being vigilant at all times, and providing opportunity for pupils to discuss any issues they have. A community police officer has been invited by the school to provide a forum for discussion and education on topics such as cyber-bullying and on-line internet safety. This has been well received by pupils.

Positive behaviour is primarily promoted through a reward system of points and incentives followed through with praise in key working sessions between residential staff and pupils.

Sanctions are appropriately used to address negative behaviours and educate pupils of direct consequences. Use of physical intervention is rare and residential staff use de-escalation techniques with pupils to manage behavioural incidences. However, not all staff are trained in the technique.

Arrangements for safe recruitment practice are satisfactory. The recruitment policy is not comprehensive nor refers to safer recruitment guidance. However, the school is aware of these issues and has taken steps to address this.

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

The leadership and management of boarding is adequate. The boarding provision has recently been expanded and reorganised with the development of a newly-built house for Year 11 pupils. The residential provision is a highly valued and integral part of the school. The greater majority of pupils benefit from overnight residential stays. Pupils speak positively of their boarding experience. Parents feel involved and supported by the school. They believe that the residential provision supports and compliments the school and significantly contributes to improving outcomes.

The school has clear written policy for its residential provision, which outlines boarding principles and practice. Key staff across the whole school setting have begun to develop a more cohesive way of working in the best interest of pupils. This relates to the 24-hour curriculum. The adjustment in day-to-day work practice is an ongoing process. Care planning records do not always evidence the progress made by pupils nor provide clear guidance to help inform residential staff.

There are good staffing arrangements in place. Staff are designated to work in a specific house and there is a good staffing structure in place. Staff retention is strong and morale is good. Staff feel well supported through regular staff meetings, annual appraisals and individual supervision. Training provision for staff is not robust. This relates to the organisation of training delivery, particularly mandatory and national vocational qualifications for residential staff.

The school's prospectus is very informative, giving parents and carers a clear idea of the school's commitment to further developing the students. Parent View surveys conducted on line were overall positive about the school's ability to keep students safe and improve their physical, social and education needs. Comments from parents include: 'I am very happy with the boarding provision. At the last school my daughter was at, she was very isolated, did not have many friends and she hated school. This school has been a positive experience for her of school; she has made new friends and has made so much progress educationally with the help she gets with prep. I feel the staff keep her safe' and 'Overall, I would describe it as an environment of nurturing, caring and happiness, they get the fullest potential from every student, I cannot fault it.'

The school has some policies and procedures that require review; however those policies relating to safeguarding matters are up to date. The required review and revision of some policies does not have any impact on the care and support provided to residential pupils.

Governors' reports are completed and informative and written reports provide sufficient evaluation of the service in order to promote its improvement. However, the school's internal monitoring procedure is not sufficiently robust, particularly in the areas of health and safety. This relates to matters outlined in appendix 2 of Residential Special Schools national minimum standards.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	110180
<b>Social care unique reference number</b>	SC011137
<b>DfE registration number</b>	869/7005

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.

<b>Type of school</b>	Non-maintained, mixed special school
<b>Number of boarders on roll</b>	192
<b>Gender of boarders</b>	Mixed
<b>Age range of boarders</b>	5 to 19
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr D A J Shaw
<b>Date of previous boarding inspection</b>	30/06/2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	01635 244200
<b>Email address</b>	p.gale@maryhare.org.uk



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