

Rowdeford School

Rowdeford School, Rowde, DEVIZES, Wiltshire, SN10 2QQ

Inspection dates	17/06/2013 to 19/06/2013	
Overall effectiveness	Outstanding	1
Outcomes for residential pupils	Outstanding	1
Quality of residential provision and care	Outstanding	1
Residential pupils' safety	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management of the residential provision	Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings

The residential provision is outstanding because

- The school provides strong and effective leadership which positively impacts on the overall care and support residential pupils receive. The school has fully addressed all areas of improvement identified at the last inspection.
- Residential pupils enjoy and benefit enormously from living within a caring and nurturing environment. They receive an excellent standard of care and support from a dedicated staff team who is very committed to providing them with the highest level of care. Residential and academic staff work effectively together with excellent communication systems being well embedded in practice. These systems actively promote and support the personal, social and academic development and progress of residential pupils.
- Effective and robust safeguarding practices are well implemented and embedded in practice for the protection, safety and well-being of residential pupils.
- Residential pupils are provided with a wide range of stimulating and enjoyable recreational activities both within the school and in the wider community. Their personal talents and interests are also fully promoted. They are also supported, wherever possible, to attend clubs previously engaged in prior to becoming a residential pupil.
- Residential pupils live in an environment that provides them with clear boundaries and expectations in respect to their behaviour. They have made significant progress in relation to their behaviour, and conduct themselves in an exemplary way, being polite and well mannered.

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 school was notified of the inspection on the day it commenced. There are three residential units, all of which were inspected. The views of all residential pupils were obtained in groups regarding the care and services provided. The views of staff were also sought regarding the care they provide and the support they receive. The views of some parents were also obtained through telephone calls. As part of the inspection process, a range of documents and records were also examined. Management were kept fully apprised of the findings obtained on a daily basis and given every opportunity to comment.

Inspection team

Thomas Webber

Lead social care inspector

Full report

Information about this school

Rowdeford School is a local authority, co-educational, special school for pupils aged between 11 and 16 years with complex learning disabilities. The school provides places for a maximum of 130 pupils. All pupils admitted to the school are subject to a statement of special educational needs and disability under the 1996 Education Act. The school is situated in a village located near to the town of Devizes in Wiltshire.

The school provides weekly residential provision for up to 23 boys and girls during the school terms. The residential provision, provided within the main school building, comprises three separate units that accommodate junior boys, senior boys and girls. Referrals for admission to boarding may come from external agencies, the school, parents, carers, or pupils. During this inspection there were 106 day pupils and 18 residential pupils.

The residential provision was last inspected on 4 July 2012.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- review and revise residential pupils' individual care plans to ensure they provide a more comprehensive record on how their needs are met on a day-to-day basis.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for residential pupils

Outstanding

Outcomes for residential pupils are outstanding. Residential pupils make enormous progress emotionally, socially and academically by living in a warm, nurturing, structured, stimulating and inclusive environment. The highly integrated approach promotes the welfare of residential pupils.

Residential pupils are provided with excellent opportunities to make and sustain positive relationships and friendships. The inclusive nature of the school extends to the daily life and routines of the residential provision. Excellent relationships have been formed between residential pupils themselves and within the staff teams. Staff are extremely committed to ensuring that residential pupils receive a high level of care and support. This is sensitively delivered in a relaxed and nurturing atmosphere.

Residential pupils enjoy and benefit from living within the residential provision and taking part in a wide range of stimulating activities. They are able to develop their interests and abilities and to practice and master new skills. They take a pride in their achievements and enjoy the praise they receive and the celebration of their progress. This assists residential pupils to grow in confidence and contributes to them trying out new things in order to achieve their full potential. Residential pupils make excellent progress in becoming more independent, which in turn helps to prepare them to move successfully towards adulthood.

Residential pupils feel safe living within the residential provision and are treated fairly by staff. These sentiments are fully endorsed by comments made by their parents who also feel that staff look after their children extremely well. They feel that the boarding experience helps their children to develop and make significant progress. Parents commented that their children have changed so much; they are more sociable and capable, having achieved a range of social skills, and as a result they are now able to do more things for themselves. Educationally they have come on in leaps and bounds.

Residential staff actively and effectively promote good behaviour. As a result, the support residential pupils receive enables them to make significant progress and behave exceptionally well.

The school operates a culture of positive consultation where residential pupils are supported to contribute to decision making regarding developments to the school and within the residential provision. The school council is well established and contributes positively to the overall provision.

Quality of residential provision and care

Outstanding

The quality of care provided to residential pupils is outstanding. All new admissions to the residential provision are carefully considered to ensure that prospective residential pupils benefit from the experience. Residential pupils receive an excellent standard of care and support from a dedicated staff team who is very committed to providing them with a high level of care. Residential and academic staff work effectively together with excellent communication systems being well embedded in practice. These systems actively promote and support the personal, social and academic development and progress of residential pupils. Academic staff are actively involved in providing out-of-school clubs. Likewise residential staff also support the education of residential pupils within the residential time by assisting them with their homework and listening to them read.

Residential staff provide residential pupils with a wide range of stimulating and enjoyable recreational activities both within the school and in the wider community. These provide

residential pupils with a range of learning and social development opportunities. Residential pupils thoroughly enjoy their leisure time and the range of activities offered to them. The personal talents and interests of residential pupils are also fully promoted. They are also supported, wherever possible, to attend clubs previously engaged in prior to becoming residential pupils.

There are excellent relationships between the pupils and residential staff. The stable residential staff team is very experienced in looking after residential pupils with diverse and complex needs. Staff deliver effective care to support and progress each residential pupil in their development. This helps residential pupils to develop a range of social and personal skills as well as positive behaviour to assist them towards becoming more independent.

The needs of residential pupils are fully assessed as part of the admission process. Although residential pupils are provided with a care plan, these do not comprehensively reflect how their needs are cared for on a daily basis. However, the care plans, together with a range of supplementary documents, reflect the needs, strengths, targets and progress achieved by residential pupils. Residential pupils are provided with the opportunity to contribute to their annual reviews, which consider the progress and whether the placement is still relevant.

The health care needs of residential pupils are primarily the responsibility of their parents and they remain registered with their family doctor. However, the school maintains strong links with the local health services which residential pupils access in an emergency. Residential pupils tend to return home if they are unwell. Robust systems and practices are well established for the safe storage, receipt and administration of medication. Staff receive relevant training which ensures that they know how to effectively meet the specific medical needs of residential pupils accommodated.

The catering arrangements within the school provide residential pupils with a healthy, varied and nutritious diet. Religious, cultural and special diets would be catered for if these are required. Staff are fully aware of the food preferences of particular individuals. A selection of fresh fruit is readily available to residential pupils on a daily basis. Breakfast, tea and supper are taken within the residential units. These arrangements contribute to meals being conducted in a relaxed and congenial setting where open discussion is encouraged. Good table manners are promoted and reinforced. Residential pupils are extremely happy with the range, quality and quantity of food provided.

Residential pupils live in one of the three units within the main school building. The residential accommodation is organised by age and gender which contributes to pupils' well-being and safety. The premises are maintained to a good standard, being clean, tidy and comfortable and are well furnished. Each unit benefits from the school's rolling programme of redecoration and refurbishment. The school continues to make improvements to the accommodation to enhance the living environment of residential pupils within the constraints of the building. Attention has been given to provide residential pupils with a warm and homely environment. The units provide residential pupils with sufficient communal space to meet the individual and collective needs. Although most of the residential pupils are not provided with their own individual bedrooms, they are given every opportunity to personalise their individual spaces to their own tastes. The units also provide residential pupils with sufficient bath, shower and toilet facilities. The doors to these facilities are fitted with appropriate locks to promote their privacy and dignity.

Residential pupils' contact arrangements with their families are positively promoted and supported. Residential staff continue to maintain strong links with the parents of residential pupils. Parents are kept fully involved in any decision-making about their child's daily life. This excellent level of communication enables the school to provide residential pupils with consistent and effective individualised care which supports them to fulfil their potential.

Residential pupils and their parents are extremely happy with the standard of care and support provided within the residential provision. Most of the residential pupils rated their overall experience as being excellent. The parents of residential pupils described the provision as being 'brilliant, fantastic', and a place where their child has made 'tremendous progress socially, emotionally and educationally'. Parents stated that the communication and support to them are also excellent, stating that they are always kept up to date about their child's well-being and progress.

Residential pupils' safety

Outstanding

The quality of the school's arrangements for keeping residential pupils safe and protected from harm is outstanding. Residential pupils feel safe living within the residential provision. Staff regularly talk to and provide them with advice on how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations as well as to help them understand how to deal with any potential known risks. Robust safeguarding policies and procedures are in place, with staff receiving regular and effective training. This provides staff with a clear understanding on how to safeguard residential pupils. The school maintains effective links with the Local Safeguarding Children Board and other agencies and ensures that any potential or safeguarding concerns are promptly referred to them. This practice ensures that all steps are taken to protect residential pupils from harm.

The school maintains a zero tolerance in relation to bullying. The high levels of staff supervision and prompt and effective practices contribute in protecting residential pupils from bullying. Residential pupils report that bullying is not a cause for concern within the residential provision.

The school maintains effective policies and procedures to deal with any incidents where pupils go missing to ensure their safe return at the earliest opportunity. There have been no incidents of residential pupils going missing since the last inspection.

Residential pupils live in an environment that provides them with clear boundaries and expectations in respect to their behaviour. They are very clear about the expectations placed on them and conduct themselves in an exemplary way, being polite and well mannered. Residential staff actively and effectively promote positive behaviour. This is achieved through the excellent relationships established between them, encouragement and the reinforcement of praise. Very few sanctions continue to be applied, with suitable records being maintained which are reviewed and monitored by senior management. No restraints have again been applied within the residential provision since the last inspection.

The school takes effective measures to check all visitors coming into the school site, and the secure access to the residential provision contributes to the protection of residential pupils. Vigorous staff recruitment and selection procedures and practices are very well established. New staff do not commence employment within the school until all the relevant checks are completed. The procedures in place provide excellent protection for all of the pupils within the school and the residential provision.

The school takes positive steps to keep residential pupils and staff safe from the risk of fire and other health and safety hazards. Deficiencies highlighted at the last inspection have been rectified. Residential pupils and staff regularly practise fire evacuation procedures. Effective systems are also in place to ensure that the various fire and health and safety checks, tests and servicing arrangements are carried out within the required intervals. Risk assessments are also carried out in respect of all activities undertaken by residential pupils and to the building. These processes contribute to residential pupils living in a safe environment.

Leadership and management of the residential provision Outstanding

The leadership and management of the residential provision are outstanding, with strong and effective leadership being maintained. Clear lines of delegated accountability and responsibility are well established within the management structure of the school. The residential provision provides an essential element of the school and staff are extremely committed to and enthusiastic about the value and contribution it makes to enhance the lives of residential pupils.

The school has fully addressed the outstanding national minimum standard and three areas for improvement as identified at the last inspection. These related to enhancing aspects of external and internal recording, accommodation and keeping residential pupils safe when undertaking specific activities. The school is very committed to continually improving the care delivered to residential pupils.

Excellent lines of communication and support are maintained with families and agencies, ensuring that residential pupils are well supported. The views of pupils and families contribute to the development of residential care practices.

The daily routines within the residential provision are extremely well managed and run smoothly. Good staffing levels are maintained throughout the day and night by a stable and experienced staff team. Staff are fully aware of the diverse and complex needs of residential pupils. As a result, residential pupils are extremely well cared for and supported. The level of care also ensures that their individual and collective needs are met so that they continue to make significant progress in all aspects of their lives. Residential pupils receive excellent and consistent care from a qualified team of staff who are supported to receive on-going training to continually update their knowledge and competence.

Residential staff spoke extremely positively about the excellent communication systems and support they receive from all levels within the school, including a well-established open door policy. These ensure that residential staff are kept fully informed of matters relating to residential pupils and about the day-to-day operation of the residential provision. Residential staff also benefit from receiving robust individual support and supervision and appraisals from senior management. This ensures that the professional development and practices of residential staff are properly managed and monitored.

The school ensures that the records of residential pupils are kept secure. Effective arrangements are also established to ensure that these are comprehensively maintained and monitored.

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	126546
Social care unique reference number	SC039099
DfE registration number	865/7002

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	18
Gender of boarders	Mixed
Age range of boarders	11 to 16
Headteacher	Mrs Ingrid Sidmouth
Date of previous boarding inspection	02/07/2012
Telephone number	01380 850309

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