

Mount Tamar Special School

Row Lane, St Budeaux, Plymouth, Devon, PL5 2EF

Inspection dates	02/07/2013 to 03/07/2013	
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	Adequate	3

Summary of key findings

The residential provision is good because

- Behaviour management at the residential provision is outstanding. There are respectful relationships in place between staff and residential pupils. Use of restraints and sanctions are rare. There are no incidences of residential pupils going missing from care as all conflicts are resolved quickly and sensitively by the staff team. Residential pupils are supported to remain safe at all times.
- The quality of care practice is outstanding. Staff are professional and use a firm nurturing nature that allows the residential pupils to thrive in their care. Care plans and behaviour management plans are excellent quality and fully support the progress of individual children.
- The residential provision promotes education attendance and improves the residential pupils' behaviour at home. The provision works closely with families. All families share a very positive view of the service and the benefits it has for their children.
- The safety of residential pupils is given high priority and there are effective procedures for safeguarding their welfare and promoting their good health. Bullying is very well managed; residential pupils and parents feel safe using the service.
- The residential facilities are well organised and run for the benefit of the residential pupils. The care provision is always managed in the best interests of the child and includes a variety of enjoyable after school activities.
- The home fails to meet two national minimum standards relating to monitoring of the service. However, there are a number of strengths in the provision and there are no significant weaknesses which have a direct impact on outcomes for residential 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

At 09.30 1 July the school was notified that a welfare inspection was going to take place later that day. The school was told that two inspectors would attend for two days, beginning at 12.00 on 1 July.

On 2 July two HMI attended the school unannounced to investigate a series of complaints that had been made against the service. The welfare inspectors were aware of the complaints and also aware that two HMI would be attending on 2 July. The complaints largely focused around educational issues.

The residential provision was visited by both welfare inspectors. Inspectors spent time with the residential pupils separately during their evening activities and dinner time. Inspectors also spoke with parents and staff separately.

Point in time surveys were not used during this inspection as there were completed before the last inspection.

There were no parent view comments for this school.

School policies and staff vetting details were not checked during this inspection as there had been no changes since the previous inspection in November 2012.

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Inspection team

Guy Mammatt

Lead social care inspector

Christina Maddison

Social care inspector

Full report

Information about this school

This residential special school is a maintained school. It provides education and care and is registered for 103 children including 24 residential pupils who have emotional and behavioural difficulties. The residential provision operates as a support for educational needs. The building is situated centrally on the school site. The residential provision is open four nights a week during term time. Pupils attend from one to four nights according to need. A highly structured routine is offered. A variety of on and off site activities are available. The last inspection was carried out on 5 November 2012.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- ensure that the Statement of Purpose is up to date with the current arrangements for the use of the residential provision building and the Head of Care's dual management role
- ensure that leaders and managers consistently monitor the use of sanctions in the residential provision and evaluate their effectiveness.
- **The school must meet the following national minimum standards for residential special schools.**
 - The governing body, trustees, partnership, or organisation responsible for carrying on the school arrange for one of their number, or a representative who does not work at, or directly manage, the school, to visit the school once every half term and complete a written report on the conduct of the school. Where the school has an individual proprietor, that person may carry out such visits personally if they are not also the Headteacher (or school equivalent). (NMS 20.1)
 - Most monitoring visits are carried out unannounced. They include: checks on the school's records of attendance, complaints, sanctions, use of physical interventions, risk assessments, and where they exist, individual care plans for children; assessment of the physical condition of the building, furniture and equipment of the school; and opportunities for any child or member of staff who wishes to meet the visitor (in private if they wish). (NMS 20.2)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for residential pupils

Outstanding

Outcomes for residential pupils are outstanding. Residential pupils demonstrate excellent behaviour while at the provision. This is a significant difference in their behaviour from their time in school and sometimes at home.

Residential pupils have a strong affiliation to the residential provision. They enjoy being part of it and feel safe in the environment. Residential pupils state that they would love to attend more than two days per week and some wish it was open during the holidays.

Residential pupils with behavioural, emotional or social difficulties make outstanding progress and improvements to their behaviour. This is often transplanted back into their family home and helps with their family circumstances.

Residential pupils are respectful to one another at the service and have excellent opportunities to develop positive friendships. They learn to respect the staff and their environment; and adhere to the good parenting rules that are implemented by the care team. As a result of this residential pupils display excellent manners while attending the provision and receive lots of praise and reward.

Residential pupils thoroughly enjoy attending the provision and take every opportunity to participate in new and fun activities that are available to them. They take part in a range of physically active games and pursuits that promote their physical health and emotional well-being; for example; swimming, gym exercises, cricket and football.

Residential pupils have access to good nourishing food while they stay. A variety of food is on offer to ensure all diets and tastes are accommodated for. Residential pupils display appropriate conduct during their mealtime. They show excellent etiquette and respect for one another. The meal times at the provision are a positive learning social experience for the residential pupils that they respond to well.

Residential pupils are well prepared for their next stage of life and some have made a successful transition into employment or training. All residential pupils benefit from their time at the hostel. The residential provision plays an important role in supporting the residential pupils accessing their education; which enables them to gain valuable experiences and qualifications.

Quality of residential provision and care

Outstanding

The quality of care is outstanding. There are excellent pastoral arrangements to support residential pupils. Staff set consistent boundaries and expectations. This provides residential pupils with a clear framework within which to learn to take responsibility for their own progress and control of their own behaviour.

There are effective links between academic and care staff. This promotes the achievement and attendance of residential pupils at the school. A specialised unit for high end pupils is now in place to cater for all learning styles. This is an excellent example of the service working together to adapt its range of educational settings offered to the pupils. Pastoral staff also support in the education unit to ensure that the residential pupils receive a high level of support.

Residential pupils benefit from the educational activities on offer throughout the school. Their attendance at the residential provision thoroughly promotes their attendance at school.

The induction process for new residential pupils is extremely sensitive and well-designed. New

residential pupils are made to feel comfortable and are encouraged to remain in touch with their family as often as they like during their transition period.

Residential pupils are encouraged to participate in an extensive range of leisure pursuits and extra-circular activities. In some case these opportunities also contribute to their academic achievements through a specifically tailored unit award schemes. Staff have realistic expectations for the residential pupils. They frequently encourage them to have fun and play appropriate to their age. This promotes their confidence and encourages their development in social situations.

Staff facilitate excellent evaluative reflection by the residential pupils. Staff have high standards and model good parenting skills. Residential pupils are encouraged to discuss their behaviour and performance throughout the day. This aids their personal growth and gives them an opportunity to negotiate in a calm respectful manner. Residential pupils strive to achieve during their stay and show a desire to want to do well for their care team that supports them.

Staff place the well-being of individual residential pupils at the centre of their practice and always ensure that their achievements are celebrated. A stable staff team is in place that has a strong relationship with all the residential pupils. Staff are proactive and imaginative in finding ways to support new and existing residential pupils. This helps them make excellent progress in every aspect of their lives.

Comprehensive placement plans are in place that provide all the information staff need to provide an excellent quality of care. Residential pupils are involved in the planning and review of their care. Their individual needs are carefully assessed and achievable targets are set. Placement plans have an excellent level of detail in them and ensure that equality issues for the residential pupils are covered; for example, their religious persuasion and sexual orientation. The placement plans are rigorously implemented and are highly beneficial to enable residential pupils to achieve outstanding outcomes.

There are robust procedures for the management of medication. Measures for first aid are sound and there are excellent arrangements in place for when residential pupils are sick. Parents are very satisfied that they are always included in any health issue while their child is attending the provision.

Residential provision accommodation is satisfactory. Improvements have been made to the furnishings since the last inspection and the management recognises that continued spending is required to improve the standards further. Residential pupils feel comfortable in their surroundings and stay in accommodation that is well-resourced and suitably maintained.

Parents and families demonstrate a very high opinion of the provision and the staff team. They state that the service is 'invaluable' and 'it is a fantastic school'. The residential provision is an area of excellence in the school as a whole. Pastoral practice is now being disseminated across the school to aid the behaviour management of the pupils across the whole setting.

Residential pupils' safety

Good

Arrangements for residential pupils' safety are good with some outstanding elements. There are robust procedures in place for child protection and the recruitment and vetting of staff. The leadership of the service has effective communication links with the local authority safeguarding department and manages allegations against professionals correctly to protect children.

New senior leaders within the school have made developments within the last academic year to strengthen the provisions safeguarding procedures. Clear lines of reporting are now in place and all concerns are appropriately monitored by a group of designated safeguarding individuals. This

means residential pupils are protected by strong safeguarding procedures.

Staff are proactive and alert to possible welfare concerns and have effective communication systems in place to report any causes for concern they identify. All staff are fully trained in child protection procedures and advocate for the residential pupils' well-being and safety at all times.

Outstanding behaviour management techniques are employed by staff. Positive and proactive management strategies are applied which are supported by detailed behaviour management plans. Consequently the behaviour of residential pupils during their stay is very good. They will regularly enjoy a positive experience at the hostel which supports any difficulties they may encounter and re-enforces good behaviour.

The care staff manage conflict and heighten situations successfully without the need for physical intervention. The use of restraint and sanctions are very rare. Some sanctions that are used have not been monitored. As a result of this the management has not reviewed all the sanctions to ensure that they are fair and only used effectively to promote positive behaviour.

There is a mutual respect present between staff and residential pupils. This enables staff to deal with situations efficiently as the residential pupils respond positively to their style of communication and engagement.

There is a clear and robust system in place for counter bullying. Parents state that incidents of bullying have decreased since the new head teacher was appointed. Residential pupils are able to share their views on bullying and other complaints they may have. All issues raised by the residential pupils receive a prompt resolution and are discussed at regular staff meetings. This ensures that all the team are aware of any problems that require monitoring and they are able to put good protective factors in place for the best interest of the residential pupils.

All the physical and environmental checks are in place to ensure residential pupils live a safe environment. Fire evacuations safeguards have been updated and routinely practised to ensure all residential pupils are familiar with the procedure. The school provides a secure and safe residential environment for young people. There are no incidents of children going missing from home during their stay at the provision.

Care plans clearly identify the protective factors for individual residential pupils. They include innovative strategies to manage the risks presented by residential pupils. This promotes the residential pupils safety; as they enjoy attending the provision and will almost always get a good night's sleep without any major incidents in the evening.

Leadership and management of the residential provision Adequate

The leadership and management of the residential provision are adequate. There has been many changes in the leadership and management of the service over the past year. The changes have largely had a positive impact on the provision for the residential pupils. However, as there are many individuals that are new to their role and the leadership team is currently under resourced a small number of discrepancies have been made. Otherwise the provision is still run to a very high standard with excellent care practice.

The provision has failed to comply with two national minimum standards. The monitoring by the independent visitor does not take place within the required timescale and does not include the necessary checks on attendance, complaints, sanctions, use of physical intervention, risk assessment and care plans for residential pupils. Therefore the provision has not made good use of the independent visitor's reports to improve the provision and outcomes for residential pupils.

Otherwise there is good management of the residential pupils. The stated aims of the provision are well understood by the staff team and effectively implemented. However, the Statement of Purpose does not state the full use of the residential provision building and does not include the head of care's dual role with regards to the alternative education centre that is adjoined to the hostel. Therefore it does not provide an up to date picture of the service provided.

Residential pupils are well supported and cared for. At this point in time the failure of the provision not to comply with the national minimum standards does not have a detrimental effect on their welfare or residential experience.

There is a good staffing level in place to look after the children that are in the residential provision. The staff team go above and beyond their duties and extend a support service to families when children are experiencing difficulties at home. Staff will regularly support children in their family home and provide accommodation at the residential provision at short notice. This provides a valuable resource to the families and maintains the children safety throughout difficult situations.

Residential staff are well supported and receive a good level of training and supervision. This ensures they are guided to fulfil their role properly and keep up to date with the needs of residential pupils.

Records are stored securely and completed accurately to ensure that they contribute to an understanding of each child's life and personal circumstances. The provision has up-to-date policies and procedures in place. These are implemented effectively by staff to ensure a consistent safe working practice.

There is an excellent relationship with parents and families. Their views are regularly sought and used in the self-evaluation process by the setting. Parents feel very much involved in their child's care and education. They receive plentiful opportunity to visit the provision to meet other parents and designated advisors from the school. As a result parents are very well supported and included.

The residential provision is an important part of the school. It has successfully met the areas for improvement made at the last inspection. The provision has clearly adapted the hostel building to ensure that it is only used exclusively for those children that are designated to it. It has also decorated the bathroom facilities for the use of residential pupils.

The residential provision is a valuable resource for all that use it. It contributes greatly to the residential pupils' attendance at school and has a positive effect on improving their outcomes in all areas.

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	113649
Social care unique reference number	SC038087
DfE registration number	879/7067

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	
Gender of boarders	
Age range of boarders	
Headteacher	Mr Brett Storry
Date of previous boarding inspection	05/11/2012
Telephone number	01752 365128
Email address	mount.tamar.school@plymouth.gov.uk

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