

# Exeter Royal Academy for Deaf Education

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

**Inspection dates** 21/01/2014 to 23/01/2014

|  |                 |          |
|--|-----------------|----------|
| <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

- The majority of pupils feel safe and happy at the school and the greater majority of parents who responded to the Ofsted parent view on-line questionnaire confirm this.
- There are shortfalls in the area of safeguarding procedures. Whilst the school has a child protection policy in place, the school has not followed reporting procedures correctly.
- There is extremely strong deaf focus within the school. The provision of clinical psychologist and counsellors trained in deaf emotional and mental well-being is a key strength.
- Recording paperwork maintained by residential provision along with school policies could be further improved.
- Residential pupils make good progress in outcomes through their individualised targets using support provided by residential staff.

### 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 the inspection. An initial meeting was held with the head of care and principal followed with a meeting around safeguarding. Discussions with care staff, and also nurse, human resources, information technology officer, special educational needs teacher and maintenance staff took place. All residential 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 accommodations. Risk assessments, care plans, recruitment records and policies and procedures were sampled. Pupils' surveys and Parents' View surveys were also examined.

## Inspection team

|             |                            |
|-------------|----------------------------|
| Pippa Greed | Lead social care inspector |
| Paula Lahey | Social care inspector      |

# Full report

## Information about this school

Exeter Royal Academy for Deaf Education is a non-maintained, mixed, residential special school and college, which caters for pupils between 4 and 25 years of age who are hearing impaired, with some pupils having additional needs. The main form of communication used is British sign language (BSL). English and Sign Supported English communication is also used.

The academy is situated within the city of Exeter and operates from one site, which is divided into two areas: college and school. Residential accommodation is provided in both settings. Pupils board for five days, seven days or part-time. At the time of this inspection there were 37 residential pupils under the age of 18 years. The last inspection was carried out in February 2013 when the school was judged as good overall.

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

- Improve and review all policies to ensure they are compliant with legislation and statutory guidance for example, missing person, medication, statement of purpose and other policies without creation and review date.
- Improve the quality of record keeping maintained by the residential provision for example, sanctions and physical intervention log and daily recording log.
- Replace residential furnishings and fittings that are showing signs of wear and tear.
- **The school must meet the following national minimum standards for residential special schools.**
  - The school ensures that: arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State (as referenced in 'Residential Special Schools National Minimum Standards'). (NMS 11)

## Inspection judgements

### Outcomes for residential pupils

**Good**

Outcomes for residential pupils are good. The majority of residential pupils enjoy the residential experience. Residential pupils make good progress to develop their individualised targets with support from residential staff. Visual charts in pupil's bedrooms help guide them to progress skills for example, personal care, reading and completing their homework. Residential staff demonstrate good awareness of pupil's aims and achievements. Residential pupil's independence skills is promoted through nurturing confidence in communicating with hearing members of the public or developing road safety awareness. One pupil spoke positively of integrating at college with hearing peers and considering future career planning by looking for work opportunities with support from staff. This means the experience of boarding life helps pupils to make personal developments such as developing life skills, gaining confidence, making friends and achieving good academic progress, which in turn helps them to thrive.

Residential pupils have good relationships with their peers and staff. Pupils spoke positively of making friends and were seen to be respectful of one another. They also confirm that they like their key workers and staff team. Comments include: 'She's fun', 'mine's funny', and 'we spend good time together.' Residential pupils are supported to manage behaviours that may at times be challenging and as a result of the supportive approach, use of physical intervention are extremely rare in boarding time. This means many residential pupils have seen positive changes to their social skills and daily life activities. They are assisted to make progress in areas, such as, nurturing their self-identity as a deaf person, experiencing deaf culture in a positive way and ensuring they have the skills for adult and independent life.

Information and communication technology provision is very good. There is evidence of new ideas being explored with deaf-friendly applications being utilised. This means residential pupils benefit from new assistive technology, which in turn increases their self-esteem, independence and confidence.

The school offers pupils a good independent life skills programme that is supported by the further education provision. Residential pupils engage in the wider community through vocational courses and work experience that is tailored to their individual interests such as working in hairdressing or pre-school nursery. Residential pupils asked for assistance with driving theory test and the college has set up opportunities for them to take lessons with communication support provided.

### Quality of residential provision and care

**Good**

The quality of care of residential pupils 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 assess the suitability of the provision for that child. Induction involves a key staff member and residential pupil acting as a peer buddy to support the transition process. This also include the introduction of a visual check list used by peer buddy when showing newcomers around the college residence. New residential pupils confirm they feel settled. Some say they make close friends and get to have fun. Pupils comments include: 'I used to be homesick but I'm used to it now.'

Residential pupils benefit from having good care plans that contain clear and relevant information provided by parents, health and placing authorities. The college has developed a strong person-centred care planning approach. Residential pupils benefit from visual care plan created with their involvement. These are extremely personalised to each individual. However, individual care plans within school residential provision do not fully detail pupils' daily routines.

Residential pupils are cared for by an experienced and caring residential staff team who provide good quality care. Effective behaviour management means that their behaviour improves. There is a clear ethos regarding anti-bullying including cyber-bullying. The school benefit from a strong information technology input. Residential pupils, staff and parent awareness training have been provided with positive results. This means residential pupils' experience of cyber bullying has reduced through increased self-awareness of internet safety and appropriate behaviour.

Residential pupils live in gender and age separate residential floors and accommodations that are furnished to an overall good standard and have suitable adaptations. Toilet and bathing facilities are of a fair standard and afford suitable privacy. Some communal areas are more personalised than others with eye-catching displays of pictures, posters and photographs or a 'beauty parlour' set up within the lounge area in the girls' accommodation. Some residential areas show signs of wear and tear for example, torn seating cover or curtains not fully hung. Pupils say they get to personalise their bedrooms and generally enjoy boarding life. Feedback from pupils reflect areas within the residential environment that they like to see improved. For example, some said mattresses feels hard, the building is sometimes too hot and some say they dislike the colours of the walls. The head of care has implemented regular informal flat meetings with residential pupils and took on board their views.

All the parents who responded to Ofsted's on-line parent view questionnaire said that their child is well looked after at the school. Residential pupils spoken with confirmed that they know who to speak to if they have any worries.

Residential pupils receive a good standard of catering. All meals offer a suitable choice and variety. Overall meals are of good quality, well presented and plentiful. The catering staff have British sign language skills, which enable them to communicate well with pupils.

The school nurse assist pupils to understand the importance of good health and personal care. The procedure for safe storage and administration of medication is robust. The nurse arranges additional training for staff to meet the changing needs of pupils who board. Since the last inspection, a male member of staff has been identified for specific male sexual health awareness therefore older boys can now access discreet advice with more confidence.

Residential pupils are encouraged to participate in purposeful activities of their choice. The range of activities are wide and provide stimulating experiences. This enables residential pupils to integrate into the local community and increase their self-esteem and self-confidence. Activities include: visiting a climbing wall, going to the cinema, watching a signed theatre performance, using the local swimming pool and going out for a meal.

### **Residential pupils' safety**

### **Adequate**

The safety of residential pupils is adequate. This is due to the arrangements for reporting safeguarding incidences. Child protection concerns or allegations made by pupils have not been referred to the local safeguarding team or the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) respectively straight away therefore compromising the integrity of evidence gathering. The school's child protection policy states this however; this has not been adhered to in the correct chronological order. Record keeping catalogues sequencing of events but these do not sufficiently evidence appropriate decision making and demonstrate how the risk would be addressed and minimised. Although these past incidences relate to over 18 or day pupils, the potential of the impact could have been significant resulting in variable outcomes for these pupils.

All residential pupils spoken with said they feel safe at the school. They have positive and trusting relationships with residential staff who are well informed about their needs which in turn manage and minimise any potential challenging behaviours. Behaviour is good and residential staff are

confident and supportive in manner towards pupils. Use of physical intervention is rare and staff are trained in the procedures. Sanctions are used appropriately to address negative behaviours and educate pupils of direct consequences. The residential pupils acknowledge that if bullying does occur staff are very quick to act. Residential pupils do not generally go missing. The school has a missing person policy in place, which refers to Runaway and Missing from Home and Care (RMFHC) guidance however, joint protocols with local police has not been implemented.

There are very effective systems in place to ensure health and safety, fire and maintenance of the site is maintained. Risk assessments are up to date. Regular and comprehensive checks and servicing are carried across the whole school site. This ensure residential pupils are protected from hazard. Staff training covers fire safety awareness, fire marshalling and fire extinguisher. Pupils also undertake regular fire drills and are clear of what action to take.

Well organised and robust records evidence effective recruitment practice. This safeguards residential pupils from unsuitable people working within the school and residential provision.

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

The leadership and management of residential provision is adequate. The residential provision is an integral part of the school and has areas of strengths yet this is not always fully recognised or celebrated across the whole school. Residential pupils speak positively of their boarding experience. Parent View on-line surveys conducted by Ofsted demonstrate a greater majority of parents would recommend this school to other parents and generally most consider their child to be happy while boarding. Parents' comments include: 'As a parent it is hard to send your child away to school and even harder when it is your only child, but I can honestly say the care she receives in residential is wonderful. Her care workers are so good that I never have to worry about my daughter during the week. They keep me fully updated in all aspects of [residential pupil]'s school work and behaviour.'

The aims of residential provision are outlined in the school's Statement of Purpose and 24-hour care curriculum. These are clear and easy to understand. Residential staff liaise with school staff through ways of working in the best interest of pupils. Care planning records do not always evidence the quality of care delivered or detail daily progress made by pupils. These include quality of recording within physical intervention and sanction records. Also, not all policies and procedures provided show correct contact details or creation and review dates.

Governors' reports are completed and information and written reports provide sufficient checks of the service in order to progress improvements. The head of care has implemented a comprehensive and self-evaluative report, which demonstrates awareness of strengths and weaknesses. This report details area identified for improvement and what actions have been made. There are processes in place to seek residential pupils' views on the quality of care provided. One of which has been implemented since the last inspection visit. This is gathered through informal flat meetings held between the head of care and pupils. Pupils confirm that their views have been listened to and acted upon.

The school has a strong deaf focus and a key strength is the access to therapeutic services. For example, both deaf and hearing counsellors led by the clinical psychologist all of whom sign British sign language. This also includes support from Special Educational Need (SEN) lead teacher who has been implementing a new pilot of 'care around the child' with encouraging outcomes. This means residential pupils benefit from effective holistic therapeutic approaches centred on their specific communication and emotional needs.

There are good staffing arrangements in place. Staff retention is sound and morale is good. Staff feel confident and well supported through regular staff meetings, annual appraisals and individual

supervision. Training delivery is good and staff confirm this. Staff are able to demonstrate detailed knowledge of the pupils they care for. The greater majority of staff hold relevant qualification equivalent to National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) level 3 with the remainder currently studying for this. Residential pupils are well supported by a skilled staff team.

## 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>             | 113654   |
| <b>Social care unique reference number</b> | SC022216 |
| <b>DfE registration number</b>             | 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.

|   |               |
|---|---------------|
| <b>Type of school</b>                       | Academy       |
| <b>Number of boarders on roll</b>           | 35            |
| <b>Gender of boarders</b>                   | Mixed         |
| <b>Age range of boarders</b>                | 4 to 25       |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                          | Ms Ros Way    |
| <b>Date of previous boarding inspection</b> | 28/02/2013    |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                     | 01392 267 023 |

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