

Penn Hall School

Penn Hall School, Vicarage Road, Penn, WOLVERHAMPTON, WV4 5HP

Inspection dates 03/02/2014 to 05/02/2014

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

- Parents, carers, social workers and residential pupils all hold the school in exceptionally high regard. They say the impact of the boarding experience on residential pupils is excellent. Residential pupils develop their confidence, self-esteem, skills, independence, a sense of self-worth and aspirations.
- The school safeguards pupils extremely well; parents confirm they have absolute confidence in the staff to keep their children safe. This is underpinned by proactive multi-agency working to identify and address potential issues at an early stage.
- Boarding is well organised, with excellent consideration of friendship groups and dynamics to ensure pupils get the most out of their stays. There are excellent links between residence and school and staff across both disciplines, as well as auxiliary staff, know the children well, making them feel valued.
- The promotion of equality of opportunity is absolutely fundamental to the ethos of the school. Staff do not view disability as a barrier; they actively remove obstacles and show creativity in offering life-enhancing opportunities to the residential pupils.

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 inspection of the residential provision located on the school site took place following a notice period of three hours. The inspection activities included; observation of practice, discussion with pupils in the residential accommodation and meetings with residential staff, a school governor, senior managers, the bursar, business manager, nurse, safeguarding officers and site manager. Feedback gathered from parents and social workers through telephone discussions and analysis of Parent View results, along with a review of documentary records informed the inspection judgements.

Inspection team

Louisa Bayley

Lead social care inspector

Full report

Information about this school

Penn Hall is a Wolverhampton Local Authority Community Special School for pupils aged 3 to 19 years, whose special educational needs fall predominantly in the category of physical disability and complex medical needs. Some pupils will have an associated learning difficulty related to their physical disability. An increasing number of pupils have communication delays and difficulty. The school is located in a town on the outskirts of Wolverhampton. It can accommodate 85 pupils.

The residential hostel on the school site can accommodate up to six pupils aged between 3 and 19 for overnight stays. All pupils are given the opportunity to take part in the residential experience.

The school was last inspected on 27 February 2013.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that premises risk assessments are updated in line with the school's own policy.
- Improve the reporting format of half-termly independent visits, to ensure that the monitoring serves to further support the improvement and development of the residential provision.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for residential pupils

Outstanding

The outcomes for residential pupils are outstanding. They develop social relationships and interactions as a direct result of the residential experience. They are incredibly tolerant of each other, regardless of their culture, gender or disability. Residential pupils support each other without prompting from staff, show genuine kindness and have warm and positive relationships with staff. They are patient with others who have different challenges from themselves and behave in a nurturing way towards each other. They are inclusive; promoting fairness, turn taking, listening to and considering each other's views.

Residential pupils develop their confidence and self-esteem. They become more independent, which parents say they transfer to the family home environment. A parent said: 'Every time he stays in residence he comes back with new skills. Each time he comes home I can see he has learnt something new and has become more independent.'

Residential pupils are exceptionally happy to be in residence. They say that they enjoy the simple pleasures of spending time together as well as having the opportunity to try new activities that they have not been able to access previously. They talk about how they have developed their skills in sports and have developed the confidence to appear in public productions. Parents say 'it gives my son the opportunity to socialise which he cannot do at home' and 'he experiences other children, and learns about their needs, which broadens his understanding of the needs of others'.

Residential pupils say that staff ask for their views and preferences on food, activities, the way the residence is run, how they are cared for and how their health needs are managed. Some pupils are representatives on the school council and can give examples of how suggestions they have made have been acted upon; new winter duvets for the beds, a new style of sweatshirt for the older pupils, to make them feel more grown up, changes to menus. Pupils can see that staff listen to them and they feel valued because staff act on their views.

Residential pupils access a wide range of health support, tailored to meet their individual needs. Key health professionals are co-located in the school making health services more accessible. Residential pupils benefit from physical activities in residence, which positively impacts on their emotional well-being, as a result of their increased confidence and self-esteem.

Pupils are at the centre of their transition planning, they are able to express their views, wishes and aspirations. They visit other residential colleges and meet with visiting further education providers, enabling them to make informed choices about their post school provision. Pupils engage well and almost 100% go on to further education. A parent said: 'Being at the school has completely changed his life. Before he started there, he thought he was a nothing. They have turned him around. He is now confident; he is completing his exams and is thinking about going to college. He has aspirations for himself, which he never ever had before.'

Quality of residential provision and care

Outstanding

The quality of care is outstanding. Residential pupils benefit from highly effective introduction and induction to the residential provision. Parents say the gradual process prepares their children, many of whom have never stayed away from home before, for this valuable opportunity. The excellent links between school and residential staff mean that the team identify and meet individual's holistic needs, helping them to realise their full potential.

Parents and external professionals are extremely positive about the school and residential provision. Feedback includes 'it is a magical place. I have never seen anything quite like it in

terms of the atmosphere and what it does for the children and young people', 'it is a fantastic facility and we are so lucky to have it' and 'the school are fantastic with the whole family. They go above and beyond'.

Residential pupils benefit from excellent opportunities to access experiences they would not otherwise have because of the barriers of their disabilities. Parents say that their children cannot have sleepovers with friends at home and cannot experience some everyday activities like going shopping. In residence, they are able to spend time with their friends, play computer games, play board games, participate in outdoor activities and access arts and crafts. They go on trips to the cinema, bowling, pantomime, laser quest, attend after school clubs and order take-aways. They enjoy activities other children can take for granted. Parents say that staff do not see any sensory, physical or learning disability as a barrier to supporting their children to engage in life enhancing experiences.

Parents confirm that there are excellent arrangements in place to support their children's health needs. The multi-agency working is enhanced by the co-location of health professionals in the school. Residential pupils access a range of therapists, nurses, doctors and palliative care counselling. Pupils benefit from the sensory equipment available, the hydrotherapy pool, soft play, specialist beds and baths, to support their medical needs. Staff promote pupil's dignity and privacy, giving them options of which staff they would like to help with their personal care wherever possible. Residential pupils take responsibility for their health. Some residential pupils are able to take responsibility for monitoring their own conditions, such as diabetes. The staff manage the health needs of individuals discreetly, in a way that is enabling and empowers the individual to become as self-managing as possible.

The residential provision provides the space and resources that enable pupils to be as independent as possible. This supports them to enjoy spending time with their friends in a relaxed and safe environment. They benefit from the extremely well equipped school facilities and grounds. The space in the dining room enables residential pupils to sit around the meal table to eat together, promoting meal times as a social event. There are laundry facilities so that staff can wash residential pupil's clothes. The living skills area enables residential pupils to learn to wash their clothes and cook in a domestic environment.

Residential pupils enjoy freshly cooked meals in residence, based on their preferences and choices. They understand which foods are healthy and how to make actively healthy choices where possible. Staff give discreet and appropriate support, balanced with encouragement to develop maximum independence.

Residential pupils' safety

Outstanding

The safety of residential pupils is outstanding. The school has safe recruitment procedures in place to ensure that unsuitable people do not gain access to working with children. The head teacher and key staff are trained in safe recruitment. The recruitment process includes all required checks. Adults who live on site are subject to checks and have agreements in place, setting out the school's expectations of them. All visitors to the school are required to sign in and their identification is checked. The systems in place support pupil's safety.

Staff have not used restraint or sanctions in residence during the last year. There have been no incidents of negative behaviour, no incidents of pupils going missing or unauthorised absence. The nature of the residential provision is that pupils want to stay; they enjoy the time they have with their peers and the staff. The staff set clear boundaries and expectations in a low-key manner. Consequently, negative behaviour is not an issue within the residential setting.

Pupils in this school are safeguarded by the staff that care for them. They benefit from high

levels of supervision that does not obstruct their privacy and freedom. The safeguarding arrangements are robust, with two trained designated officers in the school. There is an excellent level of support for parents and the deputy designated safeguarding officer leads on the common assessment framework process. This works well to provide whole family support, benefiting the pupils involved. Staff have robust recording and reporting systems in place to manage child protection concerns. Designated officers make referrals with urgency when they identify concerns. They are tenacious in following up on concerns where the response from other agencies is not as robust as expected. Pupils are protected as a result of the action staff take. There are no issues of bullying identified; pupils and parents confirm this. The planning of residential stays ensures that residential pupils are with their friendship groups, further reducing the potential of bullying.

Health and safety checks are in place. An external company carry out fire equipment servicing to ensure it is in good working order. The move of bedrooms to the ground floor of the residential accommodation has improved the safety of pupils, as it is easier for staff to evacuate them in the event of a fire. Residential pupils have personal emergency evacuation plans in place. The school defines the review periods for risk assessments of equipment based in the school. For some of this equipment, the reviews have not taken place within the timeframes the school sets. The inspection identified this as a point for improvement, to ensure there is consistently robust oversight of risk.

Leadership and management of the residential provision Outstanding

The leadership and management of the residential provision are outstanding. There are clear boarding aims, setting out the scope of the residential provision.

A core team of trained staff care for residential pupils, providing consistent and familiar support. Staff receive regular supervision and an annual professional review, to support them to work effectively with the residential pupils. There are clear routines in place and excellent links between the school and residential provision. The staffing numbers are adequate to ensure the needs of the pupils in residence, taking into consideration their personal care needs, mobility and health needs. Managers put additional staffing in place in order to facilitate trips and activities, ensuring pupils benefit from a wide range of opportunities. Staff working with pupils in residence are committed, caring and respectful, providing positive role modelling of social interaction and relationships.

The school undertakes self-evaluation and review of residential practice, through internal systems and an independent visitor. Regular visits to residence by the link governor further enhance the monitoring. This ensures pupils have an independent person to talk to and raise concerns with if they wish. The school identifies its strengths and areas for development and has plans in place to address them. The reports from the independent visitor would benefit from being more comprehensive, to further support the development of the residential provision.

Pupils views are integral to their education and care planning. Disability does not create a barrier to equality in accessing services and resources. Pupils access and engage in a wide range of fun and developmental experiences and staff encourage them to fulfil their potential.

Parents say they receive excellent communication from the school about the progress their child makes and the opportunities they can access. There is a regular newsletter that parents find informative. They say the home-school book is very helpful and they enjoy receiving photographs of their child participating in activities. They say staff phone them regularly and are quick to inform them of positive events as well as any issues. Parents say 'they always ring me when I ask them to, nothing is ever too much trouble' and 'there is fantastic communication'.

There have been no complaints received by the school. Pupils confirm that staff ask for their feedback, through direct consultation and through representation on the school council.

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	104417
Social care unique reference number	SC043187
DfE registration number	336/7012

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	Maintained Residential Special School
Number of boarders on roll	6
Gender of boarders	Mixed
Age range of boarders	3 to 19
Headteacher	Mr David Parry
Date of previous boarding inspection	27/02/2013
Telephone number	01902 558 355
Email address	admin@penhall.co.uk

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