

Shapwick School

Shapwick Manor, Shapwick, Bridgwater, Somerset TA7 9NJ

Inspection dates	05/02/2014 to 07/02/2014	
Overall effectiveness	Adequate	3
Outcomes for residential pupils	Adequate	3
Quality of residential provision and care	Adequate	3
Residential pupils' safety	Inadequate	4
Leadership and management of the residential provision	Adequate	3

Summary of key findings

The residential provision is adequate because

- The school fails to meet a number of national minimum standards and is required to improve in order to provide a good service for residential pupils. The failure to meet the national minimum standards has not had a significantly detrimental effect on the welfare and safety of the residential pupils. However, failure to sufficiently address them has the potential to cause negative outcomes and detrimental experiences for children who board at the school.
- An asset of the service is that the new management team are fully aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the residential provision. Their aim is to put it on equal par with the excellent education opportunities and equally good health resources available at the school. The management team are open and transparent; they demonstrate that they can work collaboratively to resolve issues without objection or controversy.
- The quality of the boarding provision requires modernising; both physically and culturally. Some residential pupils board in cramped conditions and others have below standard sleeping arrangements. In places bathrooms and bedrooms do not allow for sufficient privacy. Staffing arrangements have been increased by the new management team. However, there is still an over-reliance on the expectation that all residential pupils do not pose a risk to one another and that the pupils will always raise the alarm if something is wrong. This has proven to be incorrect and the school is required to address the issue to ensure that children are protected at all times.
- Improvements are in place to fully equip the residential staff with the appropriate training and support to ensure that they can perform their role to the best of their ability. New placement plans will soon be implemented that will capture the welfare and health needs of the pupils as well as important information from parents and carers. These will better inform the residential carers' role and provide an improved quality of care for the residential pupils at the school.
- The majority of residential pupils at the school are very happy. They take part in a full

and active timetable outside of their school time. They also benefit from excellent educational opportunities by attending the residential provision. Residential pupils state that they enjoy living at the school and have lots of friends there. Incidents of serious challenging behaviour are very rare and bullying is robustly challenged by staff. Residential pupils are well-mannered; they are a credit to the school and display a strong affiliation to their environment.

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 Headteacher of the school was notified at 09.30am 5 February by Social Care Regulatory Inspector Guy Mammatt that a standalone welfare inspection was going to take over the next three days.

All the boarding houses were visited by at least one of the inspectors. Inspectors spent time with a range of the residential pupils following their school day as well as also joining them for lunch.

The views of a selection of parents and carers were obtained in by speaking with them on the phone, in person and by using parental feedback forms conducted by the school.

Inspectors spoke with a range of staff throughout the service, as well as looking at the policies and records kept by the school.

Inspection team

Guy Mammatt

Lead social care inspector

Pippa Greed

Social care inspector

Full report

Information about this school

Shapwick School is registered with the Department for Education and with the Council for the Registration of Schools Teaching Dyslexic pupils (CReSTeD) under the 'special provision' category. It is inspected by both Ofsted and CReSTeD.

The school specialises in supporting boys and girls whose education has been adversely affected by dyslexia, dyspraxia and dyscalculia. The school does not accept students whose primary need is emotional and behavioural difficulties. Approximately half of the students have a statement of special educational needs.

There are five residential houses spread across three sites. A mixed gender house for the preparatory school and four single gender houses for the senior school and sixth form residential students.

The school currently has 155 students on roll across the two sites of which 102 are residential students. The remaining students are day pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve communication opportunities for parents and carers with the residential staff at the provision.
- Improve the opportunities for independence and promoting individuality among residential pupils by reviewing the blanket approach to rules and procedure at the residential provision.
- Ensure that the Aims and Objectives document provides a full and detailed description of the residential provision.
- **The school must meet the following national minimum standards for residential special schools.**
 - Where necessary, a child has a clear individual health and welfare plan or similar record, containing relevant health and welfare information provided by parents/carers and recording significant health and welfare needs and issues. This record should be agreed by parents/carers and include: records of developmental checks; health monitoring required by staff; intimate care or bodily functions requiring staff help; and the involvement of a child's parents/carers or significant others in health and welfare issues. (NMS 3.12)
 - Suitable toilet and washing facilities are provided for children, which are reasonably accessible from the sleeping accommodation. Separate toilet facilities are provided for boys and girls unless each toilet facility is provided in a separate room intended for use by one pupil at a time, the door to which is capable of being secured from inside. Toilet and washing facilities provide appropriate privacy for children. (NMS 5.3)
 - Accommodation is suitably furnished and of sufficient size for the number, needs and ages of children accommodated, with appropriate protection and separation between genders, age groups and accommodation for adults. Bedding is clean and suitable, and is sufficiently warm. (NMS 5.5)
 - 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)

- There is a written agreement between the school and any person over 16 not employed by the school but living in the same premises as children (for example, members of staff households). This specifies the terms of their accommodation, guidance on contact with children, their responsibilities to supervise their visitors, and notice that accommodation may cease to be provided if there is evidence that they are unsuitable to have regular contact with children. They must be required to notify an unrelated designated senior member of staff if they are charged with, or convicted of, any offence. (NMS 14.3)
- There is a sufficient number of competent staff deployed appropriately, both as a staff group and on individual shifts, to fulfil the school's Statement of Purpose and meet the individual needs of all children resident in the school. (NMS 15.1)
- Children have an opportunity to contribute their views to the operation of residential provision, are able to raise concerns and make complaints, and their views are given appropriate weight in decisions about the running of the school. Children are not penalised for raising a concern or making a complaint in good faith. (NMS 17.1)
- 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

Adequate

The outcomes for residential pupils at the school are adequate. Pupils make good friendships and feel relaxed in their residential environment. The relationships between residential pupils are generally productive and harmonious. Most pupils state that they liked their respective boarding house. Although the general consensus from older pupils is that the rules are too rigid. They do not allow for opportunities of freedom and responsibility that maturing teenagers require. Therefore this does not permit them to fully express their personalities and explore friendships outside of the school.

Residential pupils make good progress in developing their self-esteem and emotional resilience through the residential provision. It is a supportive environment where they do not feel stigmatised, as may have been the case in their past. Pupils' build their confidence and learn to get along with others well. They demonstrate consideration and respect for other individual's views.

Residential pupils have good access to education through attending the residential provision. This enables a wide range of educational opportunities at the school and the local further education college. Pupils make excellent progress with their education and training as a result of attending the residential provision in relation to their starting point. A pupil states that the quality of education is better than at their previous school. Many parents state that they feel the teaching is excellent and their children benefit from the hard work of staff to help them develop their learning.

Residential pupils are active participants in keeping themselves fit and healthy; for example, they regularly take part in netball, rugby, cross county, gym exercises and keep-fit routines. They also receive adequate time to promote more sedentary activities that are important to children and young people; such as using their laptops and watching television. Residential pupils state that they are well-looked after when they are unwell. The house parents will always respond to their needs throughout the day and night when required.

Residential pupils make excellent progress as a result of being involved with a committed specialist health team at the school. Consequently pupils develop their psychological health; as well as receiving specific support for their disability which benefits their educational and personal development.

Residential pupils largely enjoy their boarding time. It is a sociable environment and they acquire practical skills to prepare them for leaving home; such as, personal hygiene and laundry routines. They are empowered to make informed choices about their future training and careers. The older pupils feel well equipped to manage their life and achieve economic well-being for when they leave the school.

Quality of residential provision and care

Adequate

The quality of the residential provision is adequate. There are shortfalls in the quality of care provided at the residential provision. The school has already taken proactive steps to address some of these and others can be rectified swiftly with investment from the provider. The failure to meet national minimum standards within the quality of boarding does not currently compromise residential pupils' health and safety.

Relationships between residential pupils and staff are relaxed and respectful. Residential pupils

are polite, friendly and courteous. They display a sense of pride in who they are and what they represent. Residential pupils generally say that they like the house parents. Some comment further that the assistant house parents are also well-liked and 'a bit more easy-going'.

Existing care plans partially met the needs of residential pupils. They are sufficiently detailed in terms of their academic needs, including a Statement of Educational Needs and an Individual Education Plan. Medical assessments and the details of specialist health input are also included. However, the document does not provide a clear individualised health and welfare plan to include details such as personal care arrangements, specific physical impairments and important information provided by parents and carers. Therefore the information available to residential staff for the residential pupils' daily arrangements is limited. The Head of Care has identified this as a shortfall and has put together a new placement plan record for all the residential pupils, that will soon be implemented.

Parents state that the opportunities for regular communication with the house parents are limited. Therefore, sometimes important information about the child cannot easily be communicated into their care plan and daily routine.

Residential pupils have excellent access to specialist support services at the school. A team of occupational therapists and speech and language therapists readily supports all the children. Members of the therapy team are involved in the admission and transition of placements to ensure that residential pupils receive a good quality level of support and assessment during these essential times. Parents state that they have seen a marked and significant improvement in their child compared to their starting point, due to the school meeting their child's specific learning needs.

The arrangements for healthcare are appropriate and enable boarders to stay fit and well. There is a good range of leisure activities available to the residential pupils following the school day and at the weekend. This promotes their physical and emotional health while also providing opportunities to socialise and learn new skills through play.

Residential accommodation for the pupils is physically safe; however, it ranges in quality across the different boarding houses. Some houses are newly furnished and decorated with a good deal of communal space. At other houses, some parents say that the individual bedrooms can be overcrowded and there are unsatisfactory arrangements in place for children to sit at a computer desk correctly. Some children have poor quality mattresses. The school has already bought new mattresses for the majority of the pupils and is in the process of purchasing these for everybody.

The majority of bathrooms are private and secure. However, in one specific case, there is a clear glass pane above their bathroom door. This means that children do not have adequate privacy when they use their bathroom; As a result, some children stay in residential accommodation that is not suitably furnished and equipped to meet their needs.

The quality of food is satisfactory. Children state they enjoy the meals and there is enough provided. They are able to ask for second helpings or help themselves to extra portions from the salad and sandwich bar. Specific dietary requirements and cultural preferences are accommodated. There is a plentiful supply of fresh fruit and nourishing snacks available to all residential pupils at their boarding houses. The school also promotes healthy eating by limiting the amount of added salt, sugar and processed foods that are available. Consequently, the residential pupils receive sufficient food of acceptable quality to ensure they receive appropriate nutrition for their physical development.

The school makes inadequate provision for the safety of its pupils. The school has failed to notify two significant events relating to the protection of children to the appropriate authorities in the correct manner. On both occasions the school investigated the child protection concern prior to notifying the Somerset Local Area Designated Officer. This means that the school may have compromised the evidence and jeopardised an independent investigation.

The school does not fully appreciate the potential risk between residential pupils. The arrangements in place to safeguard and promote the welfare of all pupils are ineffective in some boarding houses. The school relies exclusively on the residential pupils policing their own boarding environment once the house parents have gone to bed. This can increase the anxiety of some of the younger children as one pupil felt that they could not tell staff their worries due to their fear about the potential consequences.

The school operates safe recruitment procedures for all employed staff. However, the written agreement with adults who live on the premises who are not employees, is insufficiently robust. Therefore they do not have stipulated guidance to manage their contact with the residential pupils and also their responsibilities to supervise their own visitors. The current written agreement is ineffective, because it was not in place at the beginning of their tenancy. It does not allow the accommodation arrangement to be terminated if the adult demonstrates they are unsuitable to live on the same premises as children.

The vast majority of residential pupils are happy at the school; they are well-behaved, reasonably at ease with visitors and the general atmosphere is relaxed. They overwhelmingly state that bullying is not an issue and it is dealt with effectively. There is a clear policy for countering all types of identified bullying, including any inappropriate use of social networking sites by children. A strength of the school is that it permits age-appropriate use of social media. This allows residential pupils to learn to use it safely. Staff provide robust support for residential pupils who encounter negative experiences with the use of such media. The school effectively addresses learning points for all the pupils in this area via an assembly or through physical, health and social education.

The school has recently taken pro-active steps to improve its safeguarding practice. All the school staff now undergo safeguarding training, which had previously been lacking. All the significant issues that the school is aware of between residential pupils are managed promptly to ensure their immediate safety.

The senior leadership team are all designated safeguarding officers. They have rectified an identified shortfall and now ensure that all staff are aware that it is everyone's responsibility to safeguard children at the school, and not just the designated officers. The staff are also now aware that they are required to report any child protection concerns in a timely manner. Staff know who the designated people are, both within the organisation and in the local authority. This ensures that the school is now more responsive to the residential pupils' needs and transparent in its own practice.

The residential provision effectively promotes good behaviour. There are no incidents of physical intervention. Consequences for negative behaviour are low level and infrequently used. For example, a consequence might be going to bed fifteen minutes early, for one night. Residential pupils have good relationships with the house parents and respond positively to their requests. Residential pupils display a strong value base, because they do not contribute to any negative behaviour they might experience around them. Consequences from the school day are kept separate from those arising in their boarding time. This ensures that the children always have the opportunity to relax and unwind during the evening.

Residential pupils very rarely go missing from the school. Staff are aware of the factors that may trigger children absconding and take action to minimise this risk. Incidents of this nature are sensitively and appropriately followed up, to ensure that the residential pupil is safe during their time away from the school. Effective placement reviews take place following any incident, to ensure the pupils' on-going safety and happiness at the school.

Leadership and management of the residential provision Adequate

The leadership and management arrangements at the residential provision are adequate. The new management team has made good progress with developments since taking up their posts six months ago. The Head of Care has worked proactively to address many areas identified in need of improvement. It is a strength of the service that the senior leadership team is aware of many of the weaknesses in the residential provision and are addressing these.

However, the school's Aims and Objectives document contains insufficient detail of the residential provision. Therefore it does not fully describe what the residential service specifically offers to the people using it.

There are a variety of systems and processes in place whereby residential pupils can express their views and wishes to contribute ideas to improve their boarding experience. Most of these mechanisms are well thought through and are well presented in a visual way, which is important for residential pupils with dyslexia. The information shows a range of adults they can contact inside the organisation and outside such as Ofsted, the Children's Rights Director and the independent visitor. However, this is not effective for all of the residential pupils across all the ages, as some only feel confident to express their anxieties and negative experiences through their parents. Some pupils said it would be good if the school provided another person they could go to raise their concerns. Therefore, not all residential pupils at the school are empowered to raise their concerns about their safety and to bring about improvements at the residential provision.

Existing staff are only recently enrolled onto the appropriate level three qualification to support children in a residential setting. Their lack of previous training is demonstrated in the poor standard of their recording and has also not kept them up to date with new practice developments. For example, daily records can be opinionated and routines can be overly strict. This does not allow for the promotion of individuality among the children living there.

Recent independent monitoring of the residential provision is comprehensive and has highlighted many areas for improvement. The Head of Care works collaboratively with the independent visitor to ensure that a thorough action plan is in place to address the shortfalls identified. As result of the improved monitoring and management of the residential provision, there are more staff, they now have regular supervision and there are plans in place for their appraisals. Further developmental and training opportunities for staff are planned to ensure that the residential pupils will be looked after by a well-trained and fully supported care team.

Health and safety arrangements for the premises are much improved. The policy is comprehensively detailed and now largely adhered to. For example, fire drills are now being completed and recorded regularly. All the issues with the upkeep of the building and the utilities are addressed promptly. This ensures that residential pupils live in well-maintained premises that promote their safety.

The school has acted on the three requirements set at the last inspection. The arrangements for

the storage and administration of medication are now suitable to ensure the residential pupils' health. Staff recruitment now conforms to Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment guidance and staff do not commence work until the full range of checks have been completed. All new staff undertake the children's workforce development induction specific to the service.

All the areas for improvement set at the last inspection have been successfully met. The school now provides key information for the residential pupils in a format appropriate to their age and understanding; all the off-site activity risk assessments are now authorised by a senior manager and the school's written guidance for countering bullying includes provision for responding to racism, homophobic and cyber-bullying.

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	123929
Social care unique reference number	SC031481
DfE registration number	933/6173

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	Residential Special School
Number of boarders on roll	102
Gender of boarders	Mixed
Age range of boarders	8 to 18
Headteacher	Mr M Lee
Date of previous boarding inspection	17/10/2012
Telephone number	01458 210384
Email address	office@shapwickschool.com

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