

Archers Brook Sebd Residential School

Chester Road, Great Sutton, ELLESMERE PORT, CH66 2NA

Inspection dates

21/03/2014

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

- The head teacher and head of care provide clear leadership and direction and are progressive and forward thinking. They are dedicated and committed to their role. The implementation of a well-thought-out development programme continually improves the facilities and resources for residential pupils. This includes a new independence unit. Their ethos runs through the entirety of the school. Staff are child focused and have high aspirations for them. This leads to pupils experiencing outstanding outcomes in all areas of their lives.
- Staffing levels are well organised and meet the needs of the residential pupils. A well-coordinated training programme equips care staff with the skills and abilities to work with vulnerable pupils. Staff reflect on their practice and continually enhance their skills as a result of the extensive support they receive. They work cooperatively, confidently and competently. The safety and welfare of residential pupils is paramount. Safeguarding procedures are robust and shared effectively with the staff team who know their primary duty is to ensure the safety of residential pupils. Residential pupils feel safe and secure and, overall, thoroughly enjoy their boarding experience.
- Staff consistently meet the aims of the service by providing a very high standard of personalised care. Daily routines are very well established and reinforced by staff. As a result, young people know the standards of behaviour expected, and, despite some incidents, things run smoothly. Parents, carers and social workers are very positive. They comment that residential pupils make excellent progress from their starting points, as a result of extremely successful joint working arrangements. Professionals associated with the setting describe these as being, 'very effective and a critical factor in the progress that that young people make.'

- The diverse needs of pupils are recognised and catered for, as a result of the comprehensive assessment of needs that is completed prior to them being admitted to the residential setting. The integrated, child-centred approach adopted by staff encompasses each and every child. Each one is understood and appreciated for their differences. Care staff contribute greatly to the role the school has to play in helping pupils to achieve their potential. Residential pupils derive immense enjoyment from the social activities provided and develop skills and interests that they can take into adult life.
- It has been suggested to the school that they can improve their practice further by including more detail within records of physical restraint around capturing young people's views. This will better inform the monitoring process, which needs to occur more regularly, about whether the action being taken is sufficient and appropriate.

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 informed about the inspection at 09:00 on the first day. During the visit, observations of practice were undertaken including speaking with staff and residential pupils. A tour of the school was completed. A visit to the residential unit at a key time in the evening was completed. A selection of policies, records and written guidance were sampled. Individual and group discussions took place with managers, senior staff, residential workers and residential pupils. A range of evening activities were directly observed.

Inspection team

Elaine Clare

Lead social care inspector

Full report

Information about this school

Archers Brook Sebd Residential School is maintained by the local authority and provides special education for up to 60 children between the ages of 11 and 16 who have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. The majority of children are day pupils. There are currently 58 children on roll of these 48 are male and eleven are female. Of these 15 children use the residential provision.

The residential provision is available four nights a week from Monday to Thursday. Residential pupils stay for a variety of nights. There is also a range of after-school clubs available to both day pupils and residential pupils.

The school provides residential accommodation on the main site. The residential provision was last inspected November 2012. Residential pupils are able to access activities and amenities in the local community. They are close to shops and transport links.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- encourage young people to record their views on physical intervention within the records
- ensure the governing body visit the school once every half term and complete a written record on the conduct of the school.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for residential pupils

Outstanding

Residential pupils live in a highly inclusive boarding community in which their individual needs are recognised and met. Staffing arrangements are very well organised and take into account both individual and group needs. The behaviour of residential pupils is effectively managed through high staffing ratios and an extensive range of stimulating and challenging extra-curricular activities that keep young people constructively occupied.

Safeguarding arrangements are robust and protect residential pupils who feel safe and secure in their environment. The local authority safeguarding team values the contribution that the school makes in protecting the welfare of residential pupils by advocating strongly on their behalf. The local authority designated officer (LADO) says, 'The school's child protection practices are robust.'

Most residential pupils prior to attending this school, have a history of poor attendance and multiple exclusions. The school is highly effective with almost all young people, in reversing this pattern. Staff support residential pupils to establish and maintain regular attendance and improve their educational performance. All residential students have made impressive progress in their education attainments following the introduction of a 24 hour wrap around service, where care staff support residential pupils with their development in the evenings. One parent said 'I can't believe the difference the school has made to his reading, he just wasn't understood at his last school, here he has come along so much we are very grateful as a family - the staff are incredible.'

Boarders thoroughly enjoy their boarding experience and talk enthusiastically about the meals and activities provided. Residential pupils benefit from imaginative and innovative care that focuses on raising their aspirations. Residential pupils have good health as a result of the provision of healthy, well-balanced and nutritious meals, the diligent arrangements for the administration of medication and the vast opportunities for pupils to keep fit. The arrangements for attending to the medical health needs of residential pupils are excellent. There is an excellent partnership with the National Health Service in providing a weekly school nurse service which is driving standards forward, particularly in developing young peoples awareness around sexual health.

Meals are taken as a whole residential unit and these arrangements are largely successful in making mealtimes a positive, social event. Children are given choices about the meals they eat and this means they express high levels of satisfaction about most of the meals served. Particular attention is paid to the special dietary needs of some residential pupils and special consideration given to the impact that the taking of regular medication has on the appetite of others. The school responds by the application of strategies as outlined within individual health and diet plans.

Residential pupils are involved in a wide range of experiences at the school. The skills of the staff team are used to help young people acquire practical skills, such as cooking, keeping chickens and gardening. These experiences help residential students make an informed, successful and sustained transition to further education and vocational courses on reaching school leaving age.

Quality of residential provision and care

Outstanding

Within the limitations imposed by the age and nature of the building, boarding provision is excellent. Communal areas and dormitories are decorated and furnished to a high standard and provide residential pupils with a comfortable and relaxing environment while making excellent provision for their recreational needs. An ongoing programme of maintenance and refurbishment

ensures that facilities are continually improved and any damage is quickly repaired. As a result young people generally like and respect their environment.

There is a comprehensive and well-thought-out induction process which is tailored to the needs of new residential pupils, including the opportunity for introductory visits. The intensive and individual work undertaken with new pupils helps them develop relationships with staff and an understanding of the routines and expectations before moving into the school. As a result, residential pupils become familiar with the routines and expectations and settle quickly. One residential pupil said of introductory visits, 'This really helped me to settle in '

One professional associated with the school comments, 'With all of our cases I have consistently found the school to be very thorough on all aspects of transition, with every child being met and listened to by the head teacher and head of care as a starting point, followed by phased student-led transition.'

Residential pupils engage enthusiastically in an extensive range of extra-curricular activities each evening. The activities programme recognises both individual and group interests. Some residential pupils have joined local clubs, such as army cadets and boxing. As a combined force, the teaching and care staff bring many skills to the school, such as, fishing and crafting. They enthusiastically and successfully share these with residential pupils as a result of which they develop new interests. Staff also successfully network with their contacts outside the school, such as with a local sports centre and the local youth service, to introduce residential students to new activities and experiences.

Residential pupils develop a sense of social conscience and responsibility to their local community by giving their time and making practical contributions to the community. As a result, relationships between the school and the local community have improved greatly over the years. Residential pupils are valued for the contribution they make which raises their self-esteem. Some of the projects residential pupils have been involved in, such as raising funds for a cancer charity, help them acquire practical skills in readiness for adulthood. The quality of pastoral support is excellent. Boarders receive excellent guidance and support from the care staff who themselves supported by a committed and driven management team.

There are clear and effective systems for the sharing of information between the residential setting and the school, for instance, within the daily handovers. As a result, all staff develop a common understanding of the needs of each young person and mutually support each other in their roles. Residential pupils develop socially, educationally and emotionally as a result of the shared vision that academic and pastoral staff have for their pupils.

Pre-admission assessments and care plans are comprehensive. Through these staff develop a clear understanding of the needs of young people and of how to meet them. Staff and care staff again work consistently and effectively implement the strategies outlined. Staff are imaginative and resourceful in identifying new strategies if young people are not seen to be making progress.

Residential pupils' safety

Outstanding

The welfare and safety of residential pupils is at the very heart of the school. All staff receive training in safe working practices, such as child protection and behaviour management. They fully understand the needs and risky behaviours presented by residential pupils and focus on providing a safe and secure environment. A parent says, 'My daughter very much values the school as a safe and supportive environment.'

Residential pupils are protected by the school's safeguarding arrangements. Robust child protection procedures together with regular training, ensures that staff know the action to take if

concerned about the safety and welfare of a child. The school acts in accordance with the local safeguarding procedures and the prompt referral of concerns secures the interventions required. There has been one allegation against staff and the LADO says, 'The school's designated child protection officer is very good. He takes his role seriously and shares information effectively enabling action to be taken to protect some of our most vulnerable children.'

The application of robust and thorough recruitment procedures protects children from having contact with unsuitable people. A robust and well-established monitoring process is in place to ensure that all the required recruitment checks are completed before people start working with children.

Most pupils who attend this school have an entrenched history of emotional and behaviour management issues. Staff are trained in positive behaviour management techniques. The consistent application of these in practice assists most residential pupils to sustain their placement at the school and break the pattern of exclusion.

Staff help residential pupils to develop socially acceptable behaviour through the use of well-planned programme of constructive activities and several imaginative reward systems. These systems run alongside each other, such as, a league system which is based on points earned. Residential pupils understand each system and say that they are helpful. The 'top ten' are selected weekly on the basis of the top point scorers and are rewarded with a trip out of school. All pupils therefore have the opportunity to aspire and achieve, dependent on their behaviour.

Physical restraint is used when it is necessary to safeguard the welfare of young people or others but it is rarely used in the residential units. Staff are trained in safe management techniques and use these consistently. Although the frequency of physical restraints appears high in the school records, the majority of these are of short duration and are low level, such as an escort. The staff make a clear record of young people that are restrained in school or within the residential setting. However young people are not encouraged to have their views recorded in the records and as a result the young person's voice is not being heard.

The school keeps records of sanctions and in practice there is good oversight of these at a senior level. It is not always possible to determine from this record the reason for the restraint taking place and therefore whether residential pupils are being treated fairly. The detail that is lacking, is however present in the separate incident reports that are kept. These confirm that staff use physical restraint appropriately. While not without incidents, residential pupils largely comply with the expectations and behaviour is well managed. At night residential pupils settle well. Residential pupils commonly say, 'You should have seen me when I first came here. I was much worse and used to do some silly and dangerous things. Staff have really helped me change.'

Preventative action, such as raising the pupils' awareness through education, reduces the number of incidents of bullying. Pupils inform staff of 'low-level' incidents, allowing intervention at an early stage. A high and visible staff presence alongside a well-planned timetable of activities within the residential setting reduces the potential for bullying to occur. Any forms of bullying, such as racial or cyber-bullying are taken seriously and prompt action is taken to tackle it when it occurs. Residential pupils say, 'Some bullying does occur, but staff respond instantly.' Residential pupils value the system through which they can anonymously draw the attention of staff and managers to incidents of bullying and see it as an effective means of addressing any incidents that occur. Some pupils have recently been trained as peer mentors. This has raised the awareness of all residential pupils to the effect of bullying and is proving to be both an effective deterrent and support mechanism for residential pupils.

Incidents of residential pupils going missing from the school site are very low. However, in the event of this occurring, staff protect residential pupils by promptly implementing the school's

policies and procedures. Residential pupils are supported to take age-appropriate risks, such as, joining community based activities dependent on their behaviour and the assessed level of risk.

Pupils are protected within the school environment by regular checks, maintenance and servicing of equipment. Fire safety precautions are effectively relayed to residential pupils, who know the procedures to follow in the event of a fire. A recent fire inspection highlighted a number of action points but these have all been satisfactorily addressed by the Health and Safety Manager. The senior management team at the school ensure that regular and on-going evaluations of the service take place. This means that young people are afforded good care and support, in an environment that is assessed as safe and meets their needs fully. The school also has detailed environmental and fire risk assessments and all necessary checks, such as electric certificates are in place. This ensures that children live in a safe residential environment.

Leadership and management of the residential provision Outstanding

The residential provision is valued highly for the overall contribution it makes to the school and for the role it plays in the personal development of each residential pupil. Residential pupils benefit from a nurturing environment in which they feel that people care. Well-established daily routines bring consistency and stability to residential pupils' lives.

Care staff are guided in their role by a dynamic, forward-thinking and experienced management team whose primary focus is to improve the life chances and opportunities for residential pupils. The suggestions for improvement that were made following the last inspection have been met. As a result, the recording systems better reflect the school's practice in a number of areas, such as care planning. Interim care plans have been introduced for when a young person first joins the residential setting.

There is a strong desire and commitment to continually improve the service. The management team have an insightful awareness of some of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Strategies to address identified weaknesses are outlined within the school's development plan. In the interim since the last inspection, the school has been proactive in securing further improvement, for instance the development of the bungalow into a stunning independence unit. Good systems are in place to make regular reports to the governing body on the functioning of the residential unit. However the frequency of the visits by persons undertaking monitoring on behalf of the person carrying on the school, do not always take place at the required intervals and as a result long periods of time have lapsed between each monitoring visit.

Excellent provision is made for residential pupils to express their views about the school's practices and to make suggestions for improvement. Residential pupils are extremely effective at securing change through the school council forum. In the vast majority of instances, they receive immediate and positive responses to their requests, such as those for new bedding, posters and sports equipment. This contributes to pupils' sense of achievement. Residential pupils understand the reasons for requests not being granted as a result of explanations being given. When asked what they would do to make the school better, most replied, 'I cannot think of anything. If we want something we ask.'

The school is fully aware of the diverse nature and needs of residential pupils and care planning is highly individualised in recognition of these. All residential pupils make progress in all aspects of their lives as a result of the implementation of strategies outlined within individual care plans.

The staff team is diverse in gender, age, experience and qualifications. Changes in the composition of the staff team have been well managed. New staff are extremely well supported in their role by more experienced members of staff. The school's own induction and training programmes effectively equip new staff with an understanding of their specific roles and

responsibilities and gives them confidence to perform these. Arrangements for staff to complete the Children's Workforce Development Council's induction standards, as required by national minimum standards, are in hand.

The school communicates effectively and regularly with parents, carers and placing authorities. It shares information and informs them of the progress that young people make. One parent says, 'My experience of the school with regard to regular communications during the transition of my son and their day-to-day progress is very positive.' Visits to parents enhance the joint working partnership and enables the school to receive parental feedback about its performance.

Improvements in the behaviour of young people at home are largely attributed to the work that has been achieved in the school. The school website also provides an informative, pictorial overview of the school and the activities in which residential pupils participate.

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	111517
Social care unique reference number	SC006621
DfE registration number	896/7208

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	Mrs Samantha Myers-Whittaker
Date of previous boarding inspection	08/11/2012
Telephone number	0151 3382141
Email address	head@capenhurstgrange.cheshire.sch.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2013

