

The Springfields Academy

Springfields School, Curzon Street, CALNE, Wiltshire, SN11 0DS

Inspection dates	12/03/2014 to 14/03/2014	
Overall effectiveness	Adequate	3
Outcomes for residential pupils	Good	2
Quality of residential provision and care	Adequate	3
Residential pupils' safety	Adequate	3
Leadership and management of the residential provision	Good	2

Summary of key findings

The residential provision is adequate because

- Senior staff across all levels of the Academy work in collaboration with residential and education staff to ensure that children receive good outcomes. Residential staff speak very highly of the acting principal, head of care and the senior management team.
- Residential pupils receive care and support from a dedicated staff team who put them at the centre of their practice and state that they really enjoy staying at the academy. Their independence and self-help skills are promoted, and pupils state that they have learnt new skills.
- There are a number of robust arrangements in place to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils. The academy has introduced comprehensive systems to monitor behaviour across the academy.
- Some areas of the residential accommodation require maintenance, refurbishment and redecoration in order to promote a safe and homely environment.
- Not all residential staff receive the training and support they need.

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 academy was contacted by telephone on the morning of the first day of the inspection. Activities that were undertaken during the inspection process included; speaking to students, a tour of all accommodation areas, discussions with the acting principal and some governors, discussions with residential staff, members of the senior leadership team and some parents. A number of policies and procedures were viewed and documents scrutinised including care plans, risk assessments and recruitment files.

Inspection team

David Kidner	Lead social care inspector
Keith Riley	Social care inspector

Full report

Information about this school

The school received academy status in September 2011. Springfields Academy offers provision for pupils experiencing difficulties in mainstream education as a result of a combination of emotional, behavioural, learning difficulties and complex needs. It also provides tuition in externally credited vocational areas for day pupils. Springfields Academy has a specialism in sports. It provides residential accommodation for 72 pupils of both genders at any one time, ranging in age from 9 to 16 years.

There are four residential units on the academy site. All residential pupils return home at weekends and during academy holidays. The academy is situated in a rural town in Wiltshire.

Since the previous inspection a serious safeguarding incident occurred at the academy which is under investigation by the appropriate authorities. Actions taken by the setting in response to the incident were considered alongside the other evidence available at the time of the inspection to inform inspectors' judgements. The last full inspection of the residential provision was in February 2013. However, following the serious incident monitoring visits were undertaken by Ofsted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 in October and December 2013.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- ensure suitable showering facilities are in place and are well maintained.
- ensure that the plans for the refurbishment and redecoration to improve the standard of residential accommodation are implemented.
- ensure that the recommendations from the legionella survey undertaken on 04 July 2013 are fully implemented and that portable appliance testing is completed across the residential provision.
- ensure that personal emergency evacuation plans are written for all residential pupils who need one, based on individual risk assessments.
- ensure all staff receive training in the use of de-escalation and restraint and the safe administration of medicines.
- ensure that all staff, including night care staff, receive regular supervision and an annual appraisal of their performance.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for residential pupils

Good

Outcomes for residential pupils are good. There are harmonious and positive relationships between pupils and residential staff. Pupils speak highly of the support and care they receive from the residential staff. Residential pupils make good progress in developing self esteem and emotional resilience.

Behaviour is good. Staff ensure there are systems in place to actively promote socially acceptable behaviour. Pupils show an understanding and acceptance of each other and their unique needs. They demonstrate respect for each other, staff and visitors.

Residential pupils are fully supported in developing independence skills and daily living skills. A number of residential pupils state that they have learnt new skills such as cooking, cleaning and doing their laundry. Others made reference to learning to manage their behaviour better and learning new social skills. Parents speak highly of the care and support their children receive at the academy. Some pupils have good aspirations and refer to gaining employment when they leave the academy for example, owning their own business.

Pupils' health needs are promoted to a good standard. Immediate and on going needs are identified through health care plans. These are monitored by the nurse who is based at the academy. Other specialists, such as art therapists or occupational therapists, are easily accessible. There are excellent relationships with external professionals such as child and adolescent mental health services, who visit the academy on a regular basis. Pupils are also encouraged and enabled to lead healthy lifestyles. Healthy eating and regular exercise are encouraged and facilitated. Various physical activities are a popular activity chosen by pupils as their evening activity choice. The catering manager ensures that pupils are actively encouraged and supported to eat healthy foods, such as vegetables.

Residential pupils state that they feel safe at the academy and thoroughly enjoy their stay in the residential provision. They are happy, confident and relaxed in the environment and are able to contribute to the development of the residential provision. They are able to personalise their rooms, this gives them a sense of identity and belonging.

Quality of residential provision and care

Adequate

A comprehensive review of the academy's admissions policy has been undertaken in order to ensure that the needs of any prospective residential pupils are met. The review also included the needs of the pupils already placed at the academy and where appropriate action has been taken by the academy to address any shortfalls in this area. The governors and staff across the whole site have been involved in this process and a detailed action plan has been devised to evidence the good progress that has been made in this area. The academy has taken robust action to ensure they can realistically meet all the needs of pupils who are admitted. There is clear information in the admissions policy as to the criteria for admission. Regular reviews of pupils needs are undertaken to ensure their developing and evolving needs continue to be met.

Residential pupils receive care and support from a dedicated staff team who put them at the centre of their practice. The care team are very knowledgeable of individual children's needs and aim to provide high quality care. Residential pupils speak very well of the care and support that they receive. Comments received included; 'staff are caring and really kind, they help us with our homework and how to learn', 'they listen to you and treat you fairly', they are always there for you to talk to' and 'they help you learn new skills such as social skills, independence, cooking and cleaning'.

Detailed care and support plans provide good guidance how the academy meets pupil's needs. Where appropriate risk assessments are completed and action highlighted as to the approaches and steps that residential care staff should undertake. Residential staff and academic staff work closely together to ensure that residential pupils receive good support at school and when staying at the residential provision. This promotes continuity and consistency between school and residential support.

The arrangements for the management of medicines are robust and the school now ensures that a separate drugs register is maintained, solely for the recording of the administration of controlled drugs. However, residential staff have not received recent training in the safe administration of medicines.

Residential pupils benefit from a wide range of purposeful and enjoyable activities. They state that they really like the activities and that there are lots of things to do. The quality of the food is good. The academy has reviewed its practices and resources to ensure that the food delivered from the main kitchen to residential accommodation is maintained at appropriate temperature levels. Generally most residential pupils people enjoy the food provided and are complimentary about the catering manager and the variety of food that is offered.

The standard of the quality of residential provision varies significantly. Some accommodation areas are well maintained and nicely presented. However, some accommodation areas do not provide a homely environment and require extensive refurbishment and redecoration. Residential pupils highlighted this as 'something that could be better at the academy'. Residential staff consider this to be a significant area for improvement. In particular, it was noted that some showering facilities were not adequate. The academy took immediate action at the time of the inspection to address the shortfalls identified. The academy has recently commissioned a survey to be undertaken in respect of all the site accommodation. There are clear plans to develop an action plan once the site survey is completed. This includes the review of the residential accommodation to ensure that it provides quality accommodation.

Residential pupils' safety

Adequate

The academy ensures that there are robust arrangements in place to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school. Safeguarding procedures have been reviewed and in particular the policy in relation to disclosure and the actions to be taken. Swift and decisive action is taken, in line with procedures, to keep all parties safe, for example in the event of an allegation. In addition, the acting principal and governors have introduced further measures in respect of child protection and how such matters are monitored and reported. All staff employed at the school have undertaken child protection training and are able to identify the members of staff that have a safeguarding lead.

There are no episodes of residential pupils going missing and residential pupils report that bullying is not an issue. However, if bullying does occur the academy takes such matters seriously.

The management of behaviours is robust. The academy has taken further steps to improve its monitoring of pupils' behaviour across the academy. This has resulted in comprehensive data being collected that is analysed and informs the behaviour management team of any steps that need to be taken. Where appropriate, individual pupil positive handling plans are implemented and are regularly reviewed. The frequency of residential pupils being restrained has reduced and documentation viewed confirmed that only staff that have been trained in the use of de-escalation and restraint can use restraint. Good records are kept of the use of restraint and these are signed off by the head of care and acting principal. This ensures there is sufficient reflection

of practice and amendments to behaviour management plans if necessary.

Residential pupils are protected by the robust procedures that are in place for the recruitment and vetting of staff. All appropriate documentation has been obtained prior to any newly appointed person commencing employment at the school. There are rigorous identity checks undertaken of contractors and visitors attending the site.

The academy undertakes regular servicing of electrical, gas and fire safety equipment. Fire drills are regularly undertaken and residential pupils stated and demonstrated their awareness of fire procedures. However, not all residential pupils, who may not respond appropriately to fire evacuation procedures, have personal emergency evacuation plans in place. This means that residential staff do not have clear guidelines in how to respond to such an event, which may compromise the safety of pupils and staff.

The academy has undertaken a comprehensive health and safety audit and a maintenance plan has been devised. However, a risk to residential pupils is the lack of the response to a legionella audit that was conducted in the summer of 2013. Significant shortfalls were identified and these have not been acted upon. In addition, it was noted that in some areas of the residential accommodation the temperature of the hot water could pose a risk to residential pupils, and the maintenance of some shower facilities are not adequate. This means that the shower facilities are not suitable in one of the accommodation areas.

Portable appliance testing is conducted on academy equipment that pupils bring into the academy. However, on occasion staff bring in equipment and this is not routinely tested. This could place residential pupils and staff at risk.

Leadership and management of the residential provision Good

The leadership and management of the residential provision is good. Senior staff across all levels of the academy work in collaboration with residential and education staff to ensure that children receive good quality care and support. The temporary head of care is now a member of the senior learning team. This ensures that the needs of residential services has a high profile within the academy and provides continuity and consistency in the delivery of care and support to the residential staff. Staff speak very highly of the acting principal, head of care and the senior management team. Staff state that they feel involved in decision making and are kept informed of events. Pupils are supported by a committed and dedicated staff team who are extremely motivated to meet their individual needs.

The acting principal has been very proactive in addressing the shortfalls that have been identified in the service following recent visits by Ofsted. A comprehensive self-evaluation/improvement plan has been devised which is regularly reviewed by the acting principal, senior learning team and governors. The acting principal ensures that records specified in Appendix 2 (Residential Special Schools National Minimum Standards) are monitored and maintained appropriately, and that some monitoring visits take place within residential time.

There is good communication with parents and other individuals who are important to pupils. A parents forum has recently been introduced to further improve communication between the academy and home. Pupils and parents know how to access the formal complaints system if they are dissatisfied in any way. There is a robust procedure that is followed in this case, with clear outcomes.

Residential pupils have access to an independent listener and the contact details for this person are readily available to pupils. This ensures that residential pupils have a named person that they can speak to if they so wish

Residential pupils are supported by a team of staff that are motivated, enthusiastic and committed to meet their needs. All residential staff have the appropriate qualifications and confirm that they receive regular support, supervision and an annual appraisal. However, it was noted that the night staff are not managed by the head of care or a senior member of residential care and as a result, they do not receive regular supervision or an annual appraisal. These management arrangements are being reviewed by the acting principal.

The academy has a comprehensive training and development plan with specific training aimed to meet the needs of the pupils. The training plan includes continuous professional development and the academy's expectations of ensuring a well trained and qualified workforce. Residential staff receive regular training in child protection, attachment, sensory integration, autism awareness and sexual health. The vast majority of the residential care team have received training in de-escalation and restraint. However, records viewed confirmed that not all residential care staff have received training in this area.

Following an external review of governance the governing body have responded to the recommendations made following the review and now ensure that they have the necessary structures, skills and knowledge to set the future strategic direction and hold the school rigorously to account for short term and longer term developments. Roles, responsibilities and accountabilities of senior leaders, in particular those of the acting principal, have been clarified. Governors are more visible at the academy and ensure that regular monitoring visits take place and that shortfalls in the provision are clearly identified and acted upon.

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	137470
Social care unique reference number	SC039093
DfE registration number	865/7015

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	72
Gender of boarders	Mixed
Age range of boarders	9 to 16
Headteacher	Mr Trystan Williams
Date of previous boarding inspection	05/02/2013
Telephone number	01249 814125
Email address	admin@springfields.wilts.sch.uk

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