

Horton Lodge

Staffordshire County Council, Horton Lodge Special School, Rudyard, Leek, Staffordshire, ST13 8RB

Inspection dates	25/03/2014 to 27/03/2014	
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

- This service is judged outstanding overall with outstanding judgements across all areas of the service. There are an exceptional number of strengths and this results in outstanding progress and outcomes for residential pupils. Family comments such as, 'It is like a family. Like a home. It's a magical place with a connection with all the children who come', and, 'never seen care like the care at Kiplings – it is like having my own relatives looking after my child. They are trained professionals who show complete dedication', are full testament to the outstanding nature of the residential provision.
- There is excellent connectivity between the care and education staff. The strong relationships are further reinforced with excellent liaison with families and other relevant agencies. These strengths in partnership working provide holistic care that wraps around the child and fully embraces families.
- Safeguarding of pupils is held in the highest regard throughout this service. Pupils and their families have high levels of confidence about the residential setting's ability to promote safety.
- Pastoral care is of a very high standard. The diverse and often complex needs of the residential pupils are effectively met as a result of a sound care planning framework. Comprehensive and regularly reviewed care plans address all aspects of residential pupils' care and educational needs.
- Leadership is strong. Leaders and managers are committed and work consistently to develop the residential service and the school as a whole. The residential provision is integral to the operation of the school. Strategies to promote the social, educational, behavioural and health needs of pupils are fully connected. Pupils make excellent progress as a result of attending the residential service.

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

This inspection was completed by one inspector following a 3 hour notice period. Two evenings were spent in the residential accommodation. Six -Eight pupils were resident on each night. Several other pupils were using the extended school day service. Several pupils were spoken with and observed during the inspection and two pupils completed a tour of the accommodation. A range of records were examined relating to the care provided. The evening meal on both days was observed. Discussions were held with members of the management team, care staff and Designated Safeguarding Officers and parents. Documentation examined included health and safety and recruitment records, behaviour management records, care and health plans and management/independent visitor reports.

Inspection team

Elaine Cray

Lead social care inspector

Full report

Information about this school

Horton Lodge is a local authority maintained residential special school for 59 boys and girls aged 2 to 11 years with physical disabilities and associated learning difficulties. Some of the children have additional visual, hearing and/or speech and language difficulties. The school's education and residential provision is based on 'Conductive Education'.

The residential provision operates from Monday to Thursday each week with six to nine pupils residing at the school on any one night. Pupils access the residential provision on a rolling six monthly programme and usually for a maximum of two nights per week. Pupils from a federated local authority school also use the residential provision one night a week.

The residential provision is called Kiplings and is located in a separate wing of the school. The school is situated in the village of Rudyard approximately three miles outside the town of Leek. The residential provision was last inspected on 14 February 2013.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Extend the quality and skills of behaviour management with training for residential care staff.
- Explore ways to capture and use the views, wishes and feelings of residential pupils and further improve participation.
- Provide a more evaluative approach to the auditing and monitoring processes of the service.
- Explore ways to streamline the organisation and planning of the day-to-day routines in the residential setting.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for residential pupils

Outstanding

Outcomes for residential pupils are outstanding. They make excellent progress because the residential community is vibrant and exceptionally nurturing. Pupils, families and social workers have an extremely positive view of the residential experience. They say children are 'taught to be more independent', and, 'absolutely fabulous – my child does things I never thought my child would do.'

Residential pupils thoroughly enjoy their stays at the residential provision. They grow in self-confidence and have a firm sense of security and well-being as result of their residential placements. They are proud and have good self-esteem because they develop mobility skills, improve communication, gain education achievements and make new friends.

Residential pupils develop a strong sense of self-determination and confidence as they are supported and encouraged to make choices. They have positive opportunities because staff take time and are extremely patient. Residential pupils develop a strong sense of self-determination and confidence because they are placed at the centre of staff practice. Individuality and choice are reflected in the personalisation in the residential accommodation.

Residential pupils grow in self-confidence and can assert their views because they are consistently listened to and their views are valued. Staff have excellent insight into the preferences and dislikes of the residential pupils. They provide children with an array of choices including activities, choice of meals and who they might prefer to support them with feeding. This empowerment for pupils is very evident in the day-to-day running of the service. However, capturing pupils' participation and views in order to quality assure and develop the service as a whole is an area for further improvement.

Residential pupils thrive because celebration of achievement is promoted throughout the residential setting. Pupils' efforts are celebrated with awards and photographs in their individual files. Positivity and celebration are further reinforced with photo displays throughout the residential setting.

Residential pupils grow in confidence because they develop positive relationships and strong attachments with both staff and their peers. They enjoy interactions with staff and other pupils by being supported to take part in an array of activities.

Residential pupils enjoy significantly improved medical and health outcomes. They experience a strong sense of well-being because their medical conditions and medication are well managed. Children and families feel confident that pupils can stay at the provision and enjoy activities because their health needs are safely met.

Residential pupils experience a strong sense of safety and security. They develop a sensitive understanding and tolerance of each other. These qualities contribute to the anti-bullying culture within the school. Children are kept safe and enjoy positive friendship networks because there are effective compatibility assessments. Residential pupils feel listened to as they are involved in choosing room-sharing arrangements and which staff they would like to support them with personal care.

Quality of residential provision and care

Outstanding

The quality of the residential provision is outstanding. The care planning framework is extremely sound and has continued to develop. The framework embraces, assesses and consistently meets

the broad, varied and complex needs presented by the residential pupils. This diversity is effectively managed with practical and needs-led care plans. Care plans embrace all aspects of the children's development and have the highest regard for their backgrounds and identities.

Transition processes are exceptional. Children settle and enjoy their overnight stays because induction and transition are facilitated with individually tailored packages. Transition for very young children and their families is excellently managed. All children settle quickly because they are supported with good information and reassurances from staff. Children and their families can visit the service, have after-school visits and a gradual build-up until they feel comfortable.

The sheer enjoyment experienced by the children enables them to overcome their anxieties about being away from their families. The dedicated and extremely competent staff team has informed knowledge about the children. Understanding and responding to children's communication needs is a key strength throughout the service. There are excellent combinations of verbal, symbol and signing processes to ensure all children are reached and can contribute to the residential experience. The service is very inclusive and needs-led. For example, catering staff have taken time to learn sign language and join in the pre-teatime songs enjoyed by the residential pupils.

Individuality and choice is integral to the care framework. For example, pupils positively associate with personalised bedding, they have their own adapted beds and staff know about each individual child's favourite toys and preferences for personal care.

Comments from parents and carers such as, 'We all work as a team. We work together for the best of the child and that is what it is all about', and, 'Staff listened to others and this shows they are open to ideas and different ways of doing things', are testament to the school's excellent connection with families. The child is placed firmly at the centre of the staff's practice.

Pastoral care is of outstanding quality. Excellent insight coupled with effective connectivity between care and education staff provide a seamless and extremely sensitive service to residential pupils. Families, care, and education staff work as a team. They ensure needs are assessed, children's personalities shine through and pupils get a say about their care and residential placements. The management team acknowledges that a handover meeting or record may be useful in ensuring busier times like mealtimes are consistently organised. An area of improvement regarding this development is set.

Care plans are regularly reviewed. Staff practice is monitored and is very effective in capturing and celebrating the progress and achievements of the residential pupils. Pupils make excellent progress because they work towards meaningful and achievable targets to develop skills and independence. Connectivity between education and residential is exemplified with all care plan targets crossing over into education statement learning needs.

Healthcare is an outstanding feature of this service. The nurse, residential and education staff work in close partnership with families and supporting health agencies. Comprehensive health care plans provide clear information on medical backgrounds. Residential pupils' health is supported with exceptional catering arrangements. Meals are balanced, cooked from scratch and served in order to meet the medical needs of pupils. Pupils thoroughly enjoy the meals. Healthy meals, trying new foods and access to a range of keep fit activities contribute to excellent health awareness by the pupils.

Medical protocols are in place to support children with a combination of complex health needs. Residential pupils are protected and their health promoted with robust medication procedures. Staff maintain and constantly update their knowledge, awareness and training in order to provide pupils with exceptional health care.

Residential pupils are encouraged and supported to take part in a range of activities. Physical

adaptations, communication processes and clear risk management ensure all children are able to take part. Pupils are safe and their independence promoted because the physical environment is appropriately designed and adapted according to the needs of the pupils.

Residential pupils' safety

Outstanding

The safety of residential pupils is outstanding. The security and safety of residential pupils are held in the highest priority. Pupils are safe because managers have an excellent understanding of the components of safer recruiting.

Residential pupils are safe due to excellent knowledge and robust implementation of safeguarding procedures and practices. Leaders and staff are well trained and promote effective partnership working. Leaders present a consistent and assertive approach to liaison with the Local Safeguarding Children Board and other placing authorities. Early alert processes ensure any concern is discussed at the earliest point.

A key strength of the service is how staff and supporting agencies understand the complexities of young people's disabilities, behaviours and communication processes. This insight informs effective organisation and operation of the residential provision. High levels of supervision and vigilance promote the safety and welfare of the residential pupils. There are practical interventions to support all aspects of pupils' stays due to effective risk assessment.

Risk assessment and management are excellently managed. Concerns and challenges are clearly identified. Strategies to manage these concerns focus on safety but also ensure all pupils have opportunities to reach their potential and achieve.

Residential pupils experience exceptional improvement in their behaviour and relationships with others. Care planning is individualised and, where required, supported with excellent behaviour management plans. Pupils are enabled to manage their anxieties, challenges and behaviours and this positively impacts on their relationships in school and at home.

Behaviour is excellently managed because all behaviours are seen as a form of communication. Staff are intuitive and they tenaciously seek to explore behaviours and enable positive communication and experiences. Residential pupils thrive and learn how to manage their anxieties. They grow in confidence and benefit because staff are exceptionally patient, committed and proactive.

Staff have an in-depth understanding of young people's presenting behaviour in terms of communication and understanding of learning disabilities and sensory challenges. They consistently explore ways to encourage and reinforce positive behaviour. While the use of physical intervention or sanctions is rare, extending behaviour management training to all residential staff should be considered as an area for improvement.

Residential pupils are safe because health and safety checks are rigorous and effectively managed. Records are well maintained and monitored.

Leadership and management of the residential provision **Outstanding**

The leadership and management of the residential provision are outstanding. The service maintains excellent standards. The residential provision continues to develop and improve because the leaders and staff work tirelessly to provide a child-centred and family-led service.

Leadership is extremely strong. The head of the school is confidently supported by a cohesive

team of managers. The leadership team is extremely good at listening to and taking on feedback. They are adaptable, flexible and keen to drive improvement and develop the service.

Developments since the last inspection include improvements in care plans, a new Conductor, additional residential staff and the provision of a sensory room. In addition, the leadership preparation for this inspection demonstrates an excellent grasp of the inspection framework and a sharp keenness to embrace ideas for further development.

Working in partnership is a key part in the operation of the residential school. Partnership with another school in the local authority has further developed the care framework and communication processes. These positive relationships result in more children accessing the excellent residential provision at the school. Connectivity between other agencies, such as health services, ensure that residential pupils can access support across all areas of their education and social development.

Residential pupils are looked after by a team of skilled, knowledgeable and extremely competent staff. The dedication, enthusiasm and energy of the staff team permeate throughout and across all levels of the school.

The school's Statement of Purpose is comprehensive and staff practice is embedded in a strong care and safeguarding framework. The excellent standards are maintained due to robust and regular monitoring systems. Reports are routinely submitted to the board of governors, who are themselves proactive and involved in the development of the school and residential service.

Monitoring is very effective. Leaders are very clear about the strengths and weaknesses of the residential provision. The school consistently has high expectation of the residential pupils and this is fully supported in the holistic operation of the residential provision. Residential pupils benefit from the strong ethos and drive for improvement. While the national minimum standards are routinely audited, further development in adopting a more evaluative approach may be of benefit. The management team is keen to develop processes with which to further measure impact and progress. An area for improvement regarding the quality of monitoring is set to reinforce this development.

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	124496
Social care unique reference number	SC038727
DfE registration number	860/7003

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	
Gender of boarders	
Age range of boarders	
Headteacher	Charlie Rivers
Date of previous boarding inspection	14/02/2013
Telephone number	01538 306214
Email address	headteacher@hortonlodge.staffs.sch.uk

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