

# Notton House School

Notton School House, 28 Notton, Lacock, CHIPPENHAM, Wiltshire, SN15 2NF

<b>Inspection dates</b>	19/06/2014	
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Adequate</b>	<b>3</b>
Outcomes for residential pupils	Good	2
Quality of residential provision and care	Adequate	3
Residential pupils' safety	Good	2
Leadership and management of the residential provision	Adequate	3

## Summary of key findings

### The residential provision is adequate because

- The school has failed to meet one national minimum standard in relation to care planning. This has a limited impact on residential pupils considering the quality of care provided. Written care plans do not underpin the good pastoral support provided by a dedicated staff team. Care and support staff work effectively together to provide a positive experience for residential pupils. Residential accommodation is of a good standard.
- Residential pupils have access to an extensive choice of activities that enable them to acquire and develop new skills. Pupils enjoy these activities and therefore the incentive to be rewarded for positive behaviour is effective. The views of the school council are actively sought and contribute to the development of the school, pupils have a say and feel valued.
- Safeguarding practices are good. The school works well with key agencies, collaboratively ensuring the safety and well-being of pupils. Anti-bullying is high on the agenda. An improved system to monitor physical intervention enables the senior management team to focus on behaviour management.
- There are good arrangements for communication between parents and the school. The school values the views of parents and seeks regular feedback.
- The governing body has improved its responsibilities to monitor the school. The interim head and the senior management team have made progress on the development of the school, making effective use of self-assessment and monitoring tools.

### 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

This inspection was announced at 09:00 on 17 June 2014 and commenced four hours later. Inspection activities included discussions with residential pupils, the school council, the head of care, the interim head teacher, care staff, the therapeutic team, support staff and the chair of governors. Key documents and policies were reviewed. Meals were sampled with pupils and a tour undertaken of the residential accommodation and school facilities. There were no Ofsted survey responses from residential pupils, staff or entries on Parent View. The inspection considered the school's own survey responses.

## Inspection team

Clare Davies	Lead social care inspector
Wendy Anderson	Social care inspector

# Full report

## Information about this school

Notton House School is a maintained, residential special school operated by Bristol City Council. It is located in a rural area of Wiltshire. The school provides a 38 week per year educational provision for boys aged 9 - 19 years, who have behavioural, social and emotional difficulties. An increasing number of pupils have additional complex needs. All young people referred to the school have a statement of special educational needs. At the time of the inspection there were 26 residential pupils.

The residential accommodation is provided for pupils in seven distinct areas located on the school site. The residential provision was last inspected in November 2013.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- ensure that at least one fire evacuation drill occurs during sleeping hours.
- **The school must meet the following national minimum standards for residential special schools.**
  - The school produces a written placement plan, agreed as far as is practicable with the child, the child's parents/carers and any placing authority for the child, unless the information is held elsewhere such as in the child's statement of special educational needs. The placement plan identifies the needs of that child that the school should meet and specifies how the school will care for the child and promote their welfare on a day to day basis. Where significant changes are made to the placement plan there is appropriate consultation. Where applicable the plan is consistent with the care plan of the placing authority for any child placed by a local authority. The placement plan is regularly reviewed and amended as necessary to reflect significant changes in the child's needs or progress in his or her development. Where feasible, children in the school are aware of the content of their placement plans, and confirm that the school is providing care for them that is consistent with the plans. (NMS 21.1)

## Inspection judgements

### Outcomes for residential pupils

### Good

Outcomes for residential pupils are good. Residential pupils generally enjoy their stay at school and recognise how they develop with improved behaviour, confidence and through personal achievements. Pupils benefit from the wide range of activities. While they are having fun they are developing their skills in team work, sharing, respect for others and self-awareness.

Residential pupils build relationships with staff and each other. Group living promotes an understanding and tolerance of others, recognising difference. Pupils from a range of cultural backgrounds are supported with what is important to them. Individual needs are met and at the same time diversity amongst pupils is promoted across the whole school. The pupil survey confirms that they recognise how this school helps them to understand and respect people from other backgrounds.

Residential pupils report good levels of satisfaction from, 'it's ok' ,to a score of 'ten out of ten'. Recognising good relationships with the staff, a pupil said he likes this school, 'because they know me so well.' Pupils make progress in their personal development as they embrace the many opportunities available to them. Younger pupils can catch up on some aspects of their early childhood through the nurturing programme, this supports them to develop basic learning behaviours before integration into a larger classroom. Older pupils achieve with their learning and personal development to the extent that they secure work experience placements and for some, membership of sports teams in the community.

Many residential pupils struggle with their emotional development, displayed through disruptive and aggressive behaviour. Therapeutic support and the consistency from the staff team provide strategies to reduce the number of interventions by the staff. Residential pupils receive support from a variety of agencies to lead to improved outcomes with their emotional well-being and safety. Pupils and their parents benefit from transferring these strategies into the family home. Some residential pupils enjoy staying at school for an additional night into the weekend. This provides structure with activities and is welcomed by families.

Residential pupils who struggle to adhere to the school boundaries and expectations are offered an alternative educational provision in the community. This is for a fixed period or as an alternative when residential care is no longer appropriate and ensures that they can continue with their learning. Similarly, year 12 pupils are supported with access to college and apprenticeships to support them in maximising their education post 16 years. Where possible, residential pupils are supported in mainstream education.

The school council promotes the pupil voice. This group ensures that pupils feel listened to and can make contributions to the school's menus, activities and facilities. Aspects of the development plan are put to the school council. This level of consultation ensures the views and wishes of pupils are captured.

Residential pupils enjoy the physical activities to keep fit and school meals encourage healthy eating. Regular visitors to the school deliver advice and guidance on sexual health, the dangers of alcohol, smoking cigarettes and illegal substances. This supports pupils in making informed choices in taking responsibility for their health. Visits to a prison, the local fire station and contact with the local police provide an insight into these public services and promote good behaviour and citizenship.

Residential pupils are provided with opportunities to learn independent skills in accordance with their age. They are being supported with life skills for when they leave the school and become

young adults. To develop these skills further the school is preparing a house within the school grounds where older pupils will be able to live and practice their skills in independence. This will lead to accredited awards to validate their skill level.

### **Quality of residential provision and care**

### **Adequate**

The quality of the residential provision is adequate. Residential pupils receive good pastoral support from an experienced and dedicated staff team. The shortfall in this area is in relation to the written care plans. The quality of care delivered in practice is not fully reflected in care plans and behaviour support plans. The lack of comprehensive care plans has a limited impact on the outcomes for residential pupils.

Residential pupils benefit from a good induction. Previous schools, parents and carers are involved in the transition to this school, providing pupils with consistency and reassurance. New pupils are introduced to the school's rules, routines and facilities through the induction programme and the information in the parent and pupil handbooks. To strengthen the transitions between school and care, tutor meetings occur with pupils, care staff and teaching staff at the beginning and end of each day. This provides an opportunity to reflect and to share information on achievements and any difficulties. Residential pupils are at the centre of these meetings as care and education work collaboratively.

There has been some development with care planning since the last inspection such as the introduction of an assessment tool for independent skills. Care plans vary in quality with some providing good evidence of regular review and others appearing out of date. There are several documents identifying the individual needs of each residential pupil however detail is lacking on how pupils will be supported to ensure these needs are met. Similarly, where risks have been identified the action required to reduce or minimise such risk is not detailed sufficiently within care plans. This is an area that staff manage very well but the documentation does not underpin their practice.

The residential provision offers a wide variety of individual, group and community based activities. The extensive school grounds provide good facilities for outdoor play and sports. Towards the end of the summer term the whole school go away on various residential trips including camping, adventure activities and exploring the coast. Residential pupils can achieve sports leadership awards and some develop leadership skills through their membership on the school council. These pupils are good role models, leading by example and encouraging their peers with their personal development. Some residential pupils are selected as ambassadors for the school, giving presentations to local community groups and taking part in national and international school events.

Residential pupils receive health care and medical attention from trained staff. The involvement of the school's therapist supports pupils with their emotional and physical well-being. Referrals are made to external professionals and organisations when particular needs are identified. This ensures that pupils and their families receive additional support. The school has plans to introduce an integrated therapeutic model from September 2014 to enable residential pupils to strengthen areas of development they may have missed in their early childhood. Training events are planned for all staff, this will prepare them to implement this new approach.

Residential pupils enjoy school food. A varied and nutritious menu is provided with occasional themed meals. The dining rooms promote a social occasion where residential pupils and staff can chat and enjoy mealtimes together. The residential accommodation is divided into several areas, allocated by age for group living. Each area has a lounge and small kitchen for snacks. Generally the accommodation is well maintained and decorated, pupils like their bedrooms and personalise their space with photographs and posters.

The school Residential pupils can readily contact family members when they are away at school.

## **Residential pupils' safety**

**Good**

The school's arrangements to safeguard residential pupils are good. Pupils are aware of the measures in place to keep them safe such as staff supervision, health and safety procedures and fire safety. Clear boundaries and routines provide a safe environment where pupils know what is expected of them.

Thorough vetting procedures for recruiting staff ensure that only suitable people have contact with residential pupils. The school has effectively implemented recent government guidance on safer recruitment. There are good arrangements for inter-agency working. The school now has clarity on who to report to considering the school operates outside of the borders of the responsible local authority. This was an area of confusion noted at the last inspection. The school has appropriately responded to safeguarding issues by following procedures, this has ensured action has been taken to protect residential pupils. Staff are trained in child protection matters and safe working practices. This promotes the safety and well-being of pupils and staff.

Residential pupils are given information on how to keep themselves safe, building on information delivered in the classroom through the curriculum. For example, this includes the safe use of computers and mobile telephones, appropriate interaction with others and self-control in their personal behaviour. Proactive behaviour management strategies are consistently applied to promote residential pupils' positive behaviour and relationships. Any incident of physical intervention is always reported to parents, this promotes open communication. The school's policies on working with challenging behaviour, physical intervention and the use of sanctions are focused on de-escalating incidents. Consequences for any misbehaviour are often centred around a community task or a short period away from an activity or game with effective outcomes. Staff focus on restorative practice, supporting pupils to put things right.

Significant incidents of behaviour and sanctions are recorded. There have been incidents of assault on pupils and staff leading to police involvement. The head of care monitors such records, ensuring that residential pupils have the opportunity to record their views. This ensures they can have a say about the incident and comment on fairness. Generally pupils report that incidents are dealt with fairly. The daily award of points contribute to effective behaviour management. Pupils respond well to this system as they achieve different levels of activities according to their points. Those with a high number of points have the privilege of activities such as riding a motorbike in the school grounds. Success and achievement is recognised as a pupil is awarded 'pupil of the week'.

The implementation of a bespoke system to record incidents involving physical intervention is a significant improvement for the monitoring and analysis of such events. Staff report how this new system is quicker and easier to use. The senior leadership team have weekly reports from this system to actively monitor this area and further reports can be readily accessed to identify any patterns or trends. This level of monitoring ensures that the senior management have an accurate up to date view of these incidents.

Staff are proactive in their approach to counter any bullying. Such incidents are dealt with promptly and effectively. Residential pupils are aware that bullying is unacceptable and they trust staff to deal with any incidents when they occur. Since the last inspection there have been five incidents where pupils have left the school site and been reported as missing. Policies and procedures reflect current locally agreed protocols and staff have actively searched for the safe return of pupils. There are good relationships with the local police who visit regularly. This enables pupils to develop positive relationships with the police, receiving advice and guidance to

make the right choices with their behaviour.

Residential pupils live in a physically safe environment that is regularly maintained. Pupils know what to do in the event of a fire and have practiced evacuating from the three storey building. These drills have occurred when residential pupils have been upstairs but not when they have been sleeping. Such a practice would prepare residential pupils and staff for evacuation when they are a little disorientated following their sleep. Risk assessments are used effectively to identify and minimise risk. This allows pupils to enjoy both on and off site activities, allowing them to take measured risks as part of their growth and development; such as riding a motorcycle, hill walking and camping expeditions.

### **Leadership and management of the residential provision Adequate**

The leadership and management of the residential provision is adequate. Since the last inspection the interim head, together with the senior leadership team, have worked on many areas of development. This follows their improvement plan and their own continual self-assessment. Staff attendance has improved by reducing the levels of sickness and there has been a commitment to recruiting more care staff. An investment in IT systems and staff training contributes to the future operation of the school as it plans to implement a therapeutic approach from all staff across care and education.

The care team have a wealth of experience between them and many have been working at this school for several years. Their commitment to the residential pupils is strong, they recognise that the pupils need and benefit from consistency and routines. Consequently, any staff shortages are covered between team members as they strive to avoid any unnecessary disruption to the pupil's care and residential experience. The care team welcome the addition of more care staff, however, to date this has been only one person with another two planned.

All care staff are suitably qualified or follow an induction programme. In addition to mandatory training events some staff have undertaken additional learning to focus on specific child welfare issues such as; diabetes, obesity, self-harm and attachment theory. Care staff report that since the last inspection the frequency of supervision has improved and team meetings are generally held weekly. These meetings provide an opportunity to discuss issues, reflect on personal and team practice and make collective decisions with regards to any changes. Some staff report that communication from the senior management team could be improved.

The school welcomes feedback and consults with parents and residential pupils through surveys and meetings. This consultation contributes to the development of the residential provision and the school and is reflected in the assessment of progress. School staff provide transport and child care to facilitate parents evening. This support has led to an increase in attendance and promotes partnership-working with parents.

The governing body has strengthened its membership and received training on governance and its general function and responsibility to hold the school to account. In response to a warning notice from the local authority, the chair of governors reports that there have been changes such as, sharper oversight of the function of the school, regular attendance at meetings and training events. There are at least termly visits to the residential areas by a governor and monitoring reports completed. In addition, the head of care provides termly reports to the governors. This level of monitoring contributes to the good practice within the residential provision. The chair of governors reports that the leadership of the school will be secured soon to avoid the prolonged interim arrangements that have been in place for the last academic year. This will provide stability to the leadership team and the future of the school.

Weekly meetings by the senior leadership team examine reports on staff attendance, pupil



attendance, behaviour and safety. Regular reports on the number of physical interventions, homophobic incidents, racist incidents and safeguarding concerns ensure that the management team have a good grasp of current issues. The reports are compared to the previous year to help interrogate the data. Regular assessment and tracking of performance shows how most pupils are making academic progress from their starting point.

During this inspection one key line of enquiry was in response to a complaint about the schools management of safeguarding issues. The issues were explored thoroughly and the inspection concluded that there are no breaches of national minimum standards in this area. The school has dealt with one complaint since the last inspection and this was resolved to a satisfactory outcome.

Residential pupils have a voice through the student council, access to the senior managers and an independent visitor. Pupils report some good relationships with their key workers and teaching staff, these relationships ensure residential pupils can easily raise any concerns. The staff team are made of mixed gender, varying ages and from a range of cultural backgrounds. This ensures pupils have a range of adults whom they can approach.

Policies and procedures are in place. Many policies are currently under review and will be presented to the governing body for approval in preparation for the new term. Record keeping is generally good though the school has only partially met one national minimum standard as reported at the last inspection. This is in relation to care plans and therefore is repeated.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	109394
<b>Social care unique reference number</b>	SC039112
<b>DfE registration number</b>	801/7015

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.

<b>Type of school</b>	
<b>Number of boarders on roll</b>	26
<b>Gender of boarders</b>	Boys
<b>Age range of boarders</b>	9 to 19
<b>Headteacher</b>	Dr Jonathon Houston
<b>Date of previous boarding inspection</b>	25/11/2013
<b>Telephone number</b>	01249 730407
<b>Email address</b>	head@nottonhouse.bristol.sch.uk

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